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CATHOLIC DOCTRINE AND PRACTICE

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BY THE
REV. JOHN LEE, P.P.

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To

THE TEACHERS

OF THE

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OF IRELAND

PREFACE

A WORK on Catholic Doctrine bears within itself its own justification. It has little need of preface when setting it before those for whom it is intended. Such works contribute to a high and holy purpose. They dispose the minds of Christian men to receive in greater fulness the light of God's truth. They establish the connection and show forth the harmony between the dogmatic teachings more briefly set forth in the Catechism and the Creeds. They afford a further argument for Christian belief, for who can fail to be impressed by the majestic beauty of Christian teaching when worthily expounded.

It is in youth that the mind most yearns for such teaching, just as it is youth that needs it most. Curiosity as to the great problems of here and hereafter is most awake when the dawning and developing reason first finds itself face to face with the great questions of earth and heaven. Then, too, youth's generous enthusiasm most readily seeks and obeys high teachings and noble ideals. Who then, can doubt the enormous power for good of the earnest teacher well fitted for the training of young minds in Catholic truth.

The present work appears at the dawn of a new era in education as in all other departments of national activity. This nation must mould out of the fulness of its faith a system of education worthy of a people that, whatever its faults, has heard the word of God

and kept it. The schemes and schemings of foreign educational faddists must make way for a course of training that will be the expression of the mind of a Catholic nation. The youth of this and the coming generations cannot be moulded on national tradition without being taught to know and love that faith which has been the mainspring and bulwark of national principle.

That the generous hearts of the young may learn to love that faith and their wills yearn to obey its teachings, it must be set before them in a manner that will attract their eager minds and win their glad allegiance. We know what is being done in other fields. The branches of secular knowledge have no lack of enthusiastic exponents or students. In the departments of physical science, especially, do we witness an unwearying quest for fresh light. Yet not in the wisdom of earth can the mind of man find rest nor his weary heart its goal. Rather is it written: "This is eternal life: That they know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." And what a privilege it is to make known to men the works and ways of God. Surely a worthy task for Catholic priest and teacher.

To help in this great work has been the aim of the author of "Catholic Doctrine and Practice." He may well rejoice in his achievement. We feel sure that in many a primary and secondary school in Ireland and beyond her shores his book will lighten and brighten the task of pupil and teacher alike. With rare delicacy of style he has given a simple and lucid exposition of the great mysteries of faith, of the earthly life and

works of the Saviour of men, and of His ever enduring work in the Church through the appointed channels of His grace.

This work is indeed primarily intended and adapted for the use of teachers in the schools, but its usefulness, in our opinion, is not limited to them. We hope it will find its way to the book-shelf and eventually to the desk of many a priest. In its original and thoughtful pages he will find help and direction in the preparation of his sermons and instructions.

" Catholic Faith and Practice " is a seasonable book. It was written to meet a special need and it meets it well. We wish it a hearty God-speed.

✠ DENIS HALLINAN,
Bishop of Limerick.

Bishop's House,
Limerick,
April 4, 1922.

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

THIS work is dedicated to the Teachers—Religious and Secular—of our Irish National Schools. It was undertaken primarily in their interest—for their fuller instruction in the doctrine and practices of the Faith. But not for them alone. It is hoped that it may be found a help to others also who are engaged in teaching in English-speaking schools. Hence the order of the work is the order of the Catechism, and the subjects treated, those that are dealt with in the Catechism.

A substantial part of the work of teachers in Catholic schools is to instruct the children in the doctrine and practices of their religion, and to help to mould them in accordance with these. Indeed, this is the reason we have Catholic schools at all, and why only Catholic teachers are employed to teach in them. The secular subjects of the primary school programme, as of any school programme, may be taught by any duly qualified teacher. They are common to the children of all religious denominations everywhere, and may be taught by teachers of any form of faith, or of no form. But as a knowledge of the truths and teachings of religion is as essential at least as any other knowledge to the child, it must be imparted like secular knowledge to children at school during their school-going years. Now Catholic teachers only, are capable of giving Catholic teaching to Catholic children. There is the bond of a common faith between them and the children.

They only, understand the teachings and practices the children have to know and to which they have to be habituated. Only well-instructed and practical Catholics who are teachers can discharge the duties of this position with success. A Catholic school is like a Catholic home. The principal work during school hours is secular, just as in the home. But religious practices and religious instruction come in too as a regular part of the work of the school; and not merely as a part of the programme, but as giving the tone and character to the work of the day. Now the wider the acquaintance of the teacher with the teaching and practices of the Faith, the more qualified will he be to discharge his important duties to the children. As a help towards this wider knowledge this book has been written. If others find it helpful to a larger knowledge of the Faith and a fuller insight into the system of our holy religion—its origin, its doctrine, and its purpose—the aim of the writer will be abundantly attained.

In the treatment of the subjects dealt with in the various chapters, the authorities relied on throughout are the word of God and the official teaching of the Church. Hence there is an early chapter on the Word of God, telling how it has been made known; how it has been preserved; and where and in what form accessible. That is, there is a word on the Scriptures—the old Testament and the New: and what authority attaches to the teaching of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church as the depositaries of Tradition, or that portion of revealed doctrine that has not come down through the Bible. Then, as

not alone the doctrine explained in this book, but Christian civilization as a whole, originated in and radiates from the teaching and life of Christ, within the limits of our scope but as a fundamental part of the work we have brought out the evidences of His divinity attendant on His life and death, so as to vindicate the Divine authority of His teaching and that of His Church. This He set up on purpose to preach and propagate His teaching throughout the world for all time. To be entrusted with the office of teaching His doctrine—no matter in how humble a capacity—is a distinction ; to be fully equipped for it, if one undertakes it, is a duty. If and how far this work contributes to that end the Reader can tell.

I have to acknowledge my great indebtedness to my Bishop, the Most Rev. Dr. Hallinan, for his beautiful Preface and his generous words of appreciation of the work.

J. L.

CORRIGENDA

Page 422, line 16, for " is more " read *more is.*
Page 422, line 17, for " normal, healthy " read *normal health.*

CATHOLIC DOCTRINE AND PRACTICE.

CHAPTER I.

God: The Creator.

The Catechism, which is an abridged exposition of the Christian Doctrine by way of question and answer at the outset takes us back to the beginning of things. And it asks not where the world came from, or how it came to be, or if it were always there, but assuming as an established fact that the world was made, it asks who made it. This question leads up at once to God, for the answer is: God made the world. By the world is meant everything that is—the whole universe. And taking the world in this wide sense the Catechism tells us it was made by Almighty God. And indeed He may well be called Almighty. For when we consider the magnitude of the world of which our earth is but a very small part, immense though it is; when we consider the number and the magnitude of the heavenly bodies, and reflect that all of these were made by Almighty God, and made out of nothing —because in the beginning there was nothing from which they could be made—we get an idea of the almighty power of God. And this answer of the Catechism,

that the world was made out of nothing by Almighty God is declared to us in the opening words of Scripture: "In the beginning God created heaven and earth (Gen. i, 1). Much emphasis is given to this statement that "In the beginning God created heaven and earth", by the fact that these are the opening words of the Scriptures. If these words were open to question the Bible would have lost its authority. And hence if we are sure of anything that we have not seen with our eyes, or our hands have not handled, we are certain of this, that the world was created by Almighty God.

St. John, too, begins his Gospel by repeating the same thing in almost the same words. He says: "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . All things were made by Him" (Ch. i, 1, 3). The origin of the world, then, is accounted for by St. John in the same way as it was accounted for in the beginning of the Old Testament. On the express authority of the Bible, therefore, and that not once only, but on these two separate occasions of special importance, we are taught that the world was made out of nothing in the beginning by Almighty God. And the same is repeated in other parts of the Holy Scriptures. St. Paul urges the people "to be converted from vain things to the living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all things that are in them" (Acts xiv, 14). With this affirmation the Church, too, opens the first chapter of her teaching—"I believe in God . . . Creator of heaven and earth" (*Apostles' Creed*). If the Church, no less than the Bible, began with a false

statement, truth indeed had fled the earth, and was nowhere to be found.

And when we ourselves consider the world, the vastness of its proportions, and the variety of its parts, the harmony of its arrangements, the regularity of its movements, since nothing can make itself, only one Great, Almighty, All-wise, Living Power which we name GOD could be the Author of creation. Nor are we without indications of the truth of this within our own experience. Every day we see around us things coming into existence that were not there before. Every one of these, just as ourselves, is dependent upon the earth and air and sky for its continued existence. On the other hand we see all things turn to earth at death. Now we cannot suppose that we, and all other living things like us, who are God's creatures, are supported upon an earth that is not God's, that is, that He did not create, for surely God would not avail of a world that He did not make to support the creatures that He has made. Again at death our bodies, like all other bodies, are resolved into elements identical with those of the earth and other things around us. It follows then, that the earth and air, the heavens above, and the earth beneath our feet—all the forms of life, and all things that exercise an influence on life of every kind, were alike created by Almighty God, as the Catechism tells us.

Then if we enlarge our view a little and consider not the vastness alone of the universe, but the order and regularity prevailing all over the world—the beauty on so grand a scale, and the harmony with which part

fits in with part, and things answer things—day and night, summer and autumn, winter and spring, the frost and the rain, the sunshine and the dew, and the glory of life and colour over all, what height and depth of wisdom and knowledge, and what wealth of riches and power do they not indicate in Him, who, out of nothing, created such a world as this! "If anyone should not confess that the world, and all things contained therein both spiritual and material, in all their substance, was made out of nothing by God, let him be anathema", says the Vatican Council. —(Can. 1, 5).

Nor was the creation of the world a matter of effort or labour with God. He had only to wish it, and the world that was not, came into being. "He spoke," says the Psalmist, "and they were made." (Ps. cxlviii, 5). Indeed, is not the will with ourselves the prime mover of our every action—the source of all activity? The hand moves at its command, and so with the rest. In God the will is at once the source and the instrument of all activity. In His mind the idea of the universe was ever present. When it pleased Him to call it into existence He did so; and just as it costs us no trouble to wish or will a thing, it cost God no effort to wish effectively the world to be, with this difference, that while our wish of itself can effect nothing outside ourselves, the wish with God was enough to bring the world that was not, into existence.

And since God is the sole Author of all things, He is the undisputed Master of all things. No one can question His right over all things. They are, because He willed it. And as things exist in obedience to His

will, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore have I drawn thee, taking compassion on thee" (Jer. xxxi, 3), only as and when He wills it can they rightly cease to be. In the last resort the power that keeps things in existence is the same that made them to exist. The voluntary withdrawal of that power from them is the only natural and legitimate reason for their ceasing to be. Nor, on the other hand can anyone trespass on His domain without His permission and sanction. Now God in many cases permits this. The Scriptures tell us that when He made man in the beginning He said to him: "Increase and multiply and fill the earth and *subdue it,* and rule over the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and all living creatures that move upon the earth" (Genesis i, 28). If, then, we may destroy anything, we may because God has given us permission; and if we own anything, it is for the same reason. But the owner over all, and the Master of life and death is God, and He alone.

And there is but One God. The Scriptures in countless passages state this truth. Indeed the whole scheme of revelation and all revealed religion are based upon this fact, that there is but One God. "I am the Lord and there is no other." "Remember the former age, for I am God, and there is no God besides, neither is there the like to Me" (Isaias xlvi, 9). "The Lord our God is One God" (Deut. vi, 4). "For there is no other God but Thou" (Wisd. xii, 13). These and similar passages are of frequent occurrence in the Old Testament. In the New, the same is identically stated. It ever speaks of God in the singular number,

and to our own reason this is evident enough. God is the Supreme Being. Now the Supreme Being can be but one, else we must lay aside the term. Besides, all things outside of God were made by Him. He could not Himself be made. Now He who knew no beginning, and who knows no end, is eternal and infinite. Being supreme, eternal, and infinite, having no limitations, He can be but One.

And He is everywhere, not alone that His influence reaches from end to end of creation, sustaining all things, but that His presence is ubiquitous. "Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit, and whither shall I flee from Thy face. If I ascend into heaven Thou art there. If I descend into hell Thou art present. If I take my wings early in the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there also shall Thy hand lead me" (Ps. cxxxviii, 7-10). As it is the nature of created things to be limited, it is God's nature to be unlimited—He is infinite in every respect. He reaches from eternity to eternity, and throughout all time and space. Nothing is absent from His presence. Nothing is shut out from His sight. "The eyes of the Lord in every place behold the good and the evil" (Prov. xv, 3).

But while God is everywhere present, and sees and knows all things, even the secret thoughts of the mind, "For He knoweth the secrets of the heart" (Psalm xliii, 22), we cannot see Him, nor does He take up any space. Only corporal substances take up space, and such only are visible to our eyes. Indeed we cannot see every kind of corporal substance. The air, for instance, which surrounds us on all sides is invisible to our seeing, much more is God, who is encumbered by no conditions

of any sort, but in the perfection of His being is above all limitations and conditions of every kind, for He is a pure Spirit. "God is a Spirit", says St. John. And indeed we could not see God and live. "Man shall not see Me and live" (Exod. xxxiii, 20). And the reason is, we should be overwhelmed at the sight of the beauty and splendour of the Divine Majesty. The Apostles on Mount Thabor, when Our Lord gave them a glimpse of His glory, fell on their faces, overcome with its brightness (Matt. xvii). Much more so if it were given to us to see God as He is. Such happiness is not for this, but for the next life, and to this shall they attain, who on earth shall have made the will of God and the observance of His Commandments the law of life. "To him that shall overcome I will give to sit with Me in My throne; as I also have overcome, and am set down with My Father in His throne." (Rev. iii, 21).

Now this suggests to us the purpose God had in mind when He made the world in general, and man in particular. The principal purpose, of course, could not have been other than His own glory, for He could not have done anything for an end beneath Himself. "The Lord hath made all things for Himself" (Prov. xvi, 4). "If anyone should deny that the world was made for the glory of God, let him be anathema." (*Vatican Council*, Can. 1, 5). The next purpose was to share with other things the blessing and happiness of being. God is infinitely good, and it is of the nature of goodness to communicate to others what it has itself—to share its gifts with others. Hence God, whose nature it is to be, gave being to other things. Then, in all things created,

after their own nature and perfections, what is most remarkable is how in the scale and gradation of things the lower orders are made to minister to the wants and purposes of the higher : Inanimate nature serves the purposes of animate nature—the earth, for example, supports all living things ; while animate and inanimate nature both minister to the wants and purposes of man ; and all creation together redounds to the glory of the Creator.

" For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, His eternal power also and divinity " (Rom. i, 20). How glorious a Being is God ! Ever in existence, with infinite power, and equally infinite goodness, creating all things, so that all things should exist. To know Him is to worship Him : to serve and love Him, a privilege and an honour. But of created things in the world in which we live, man only can see the invisible things of God : man only can know God. What then is man, and why is he so gifted ?

CHAPTER II.

On Man.

What is man ? Man is one of God's creatures, composed of body and soul and made to God's likeness. From what has been said in the first chapter about creation as the origin of all things, it follows that man is one of the creatures of God. This description at least is true of all things that are. Many and varied though the things are that exist, and differ though they may, no matter how widely, in nature and characteristics, there is this description that is true of them all : that they were created by Almighty God. So it has been with man. Indeed how else could the first man have come upon the earth. He could not have made himself. Nor could he have grown or developed out of anything else ; for natures cannot change. No matter how individual specimens within a given nature may vary in accidental differences—no matter, for example, how one kind of horse may differ from another kind, or one type of man may differ from another type, a horse under all varieties is still a horse, and man, under every shade of colour, character, and temperament is ever a man, for nothing can pass beyond the boundaries of its nature, no matter what scope for variation of type and character that nature may afford. Hence when human nature in concrete form appeared upon the earth for the first time, it came there in the only way it was possible for it to appear, i.e., as the result

of the creative action of the hand of God. And this is just what the Scripture tells us. After describing the creation of the heavens and the earth, and of the living creatures with which the earth was furnished: birds, beasts, fishes, and all kinds of living things; speaking of the Creator it continues. "And He said: Let us make man to our own image and likeness: and let him have dominion over the fishes of the sea and the fowls of the air, and the beasts, and the whole earth, and every creeping creature that moveth upon the earth. And God created man to His own image: to the image of God He created him: male and female He created them" (Gen. i, 27). Here we have the origin of man accounted for in as definite and explicit a form as words can express it, and this in a record that, apart from its divine character as the word of God, goes back to a date antecedent by centuries to any other record in human history, even the sculptured monuments of the most ancient times, and the earliest civilizations. The simplicity and directness of this statement of the Bible are themselves evidence of the truth it affirms, while it accounts, after all, in the best, most satisfying and natural way for the appearance upon the earth, of a creature with such endowments and powers as belong to man. Indeed, how else would a being like man come to be, except by the direct action of Almighty God? Learned men have endeavoured to explain in other ways man's origin. More careful investigation, however, has shown the futility of their arguments. But while research and investigation may seem to point now in one direction and now in another, the simple yet positive and circumstantial statement of the Bible

will ever remain (even apart from its divine authority), at once the most reasonable, reliable, and satisfactory account of the origin of man. In a second passage the Bible goes a little further, and tells us that the body was first formed out of the earth, and was then animated by the soul. In Chapter ii, 7, we are told : "And the Lord God formed man of the slime of the earth, and breathed into his face the breath of life, and man became a living soul." The action of the Creator, then, in forming man's body was exercised on the slime of the earth, and into the face of the lifeless body formed from the slime of the earth He breathed the soul.* This account of man's origin is repeated by our Saviour and confirmed by Him. Speaking one day to the Jews, He refers them to this very account given in the first pages of the Old Testament, when He says : "Have ye not read that He who made man from the beginning made them male and female ?" (Matt. xix, 4). And it is noticeable with what ease and security He speaks of it. "Have ye not read that He who made man from the beginning made them male and female ?" With our Lord it was not a matter of question or uncertainty how to account for man's origin or his presence upon the earth. It was from first to last that God made Him. "Who made man from the beginning." And this has been ever the faith of the Church.

We cannot attach too much importance to this fact of the origin of man being due to the direct action of Almighty God. Indeed, all we read about his intro-

* This simple statement of the Scriptures disposes by anticipation of the belated nineteenth-century theory of the descent of man.

duction into the world shows us what God thought of him. He is not created until everything is prepared for him. Whatever time it may have taken, whether six days or six lengthened periods, from the time after the first creation of things "When the earth was void and empty, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, and the spirit of God moved over the waters" (Gen. i, 2), until the sun and the stars were in their places, and shone down upon the earth, and the dry land was clothed with verdure, and the beasts filled the hillsides and the plains, then only it was that God proceeded to make man, who was to rule over all these and whose convenience and purposes all things were to serve. "Let us make man . . . . and let him have dominion over the fishes of the sea, and fowls of the air, and the beasts, and the whole earth" (Gen. i, 26). And what is more, He made man to His own image and likeness. When He proceeded to the creation of man, the model on which He formed him was no less and no other than Himself. A higher and more perfect model He could not select. And though man as a creature must necessarily fall infinitely below his original, he must imitate Him nevertheless in the essentials of His nature if he is to be a true copy. And hence, if he must have a body made out of the earth, suitable, that is, to this world in which he is to live, his soul must be like its Maker—spiritual in its nature, with intellectual and spiritual powers. Now such is man's soul. We form ideas to ourselves of things that never were at all; we ambition what the eye hath not seen nor the ear heard, and we look forward to a never-ending destiny. Now only a spiritual and immortal soul endowed with intelligence and will is capable of such

things. All the characteristics of a nature that is spiritual are in the human soul. First it lives—has life, and it imparts life to the body. Before the first man came to live he lay motionless and inanimate before his Creator. When He breathed into his face the breath of life—the soul, Adam stood on his feet, a living being. The reverse takes place at death. When the soul leaves the body, the body is dead. The soul, then, imparts life to the body. By the soul we live, reason, and think, form opinions, and come to decisions. We picture things to ourselves that were never there at all, and we mould things after models drawn by the working of our own minds. We ambition, too, what we have not seen, and what are but the creations of our own fancy, and we look forward to a never-ending destiny. Now, only a spiritual and immortal soul, a soul spiritual and immortal like God—that lives, understands, and wills as He does, is capable of such things !

And what is noticeable here is this, that what we have just said is true, not of any favoured class of men—the able and the learned, say—but it is true of every class. The uneducated poor, whose lives are spent in humble occupations and who have to work hard for their subsistence, think and reason and discuss their wants and other things, and feel themselves above their station. They understand what would help them in their difficulties. They recognize the ways of Providence, too, which will have different callings in the world of men, and different men for such callings. And if they grumble at their lot, they look, each of them, to a time of happiness and peace, and refuse to regard death as the destruction of their being. They regard it rather as

a release from labour and privation, and the gateway to peace and rest. And it is just the same with every class. Then, when we consider what men have done in so many directions—the creations of the human mind in the arts and industry—we recognize at once what the spiritual element in us is like, and what its capacity! Now, whether highly gifted or otherwise, this life and this world do not set bounds to our ambition, for all look forward to a destiny that can be satisfied only beyond the grave.

Surely such a nature, with such aspirations and such faculties, was created for a high and noble purpose. To a nature capable of rising above its surroundings, and looking forward to a life of happiness and peace, for which death is not the end but the beginning of a happier state, and this the feeling common to the race, there is a destiny worthy of such thoughts: that is, a spiritual, an everlasting destiny. "But the just shall go into everlasting life" (Matt. xxv, 46). Now, for this did God create us, for He did indeed create us, not the first man and first woman only, but every man and every woman: "Know ye, that the Lord He is God. He made us and not we ourselves" (Ps. xcix, 3). And He created us such that once created we cannot cease to be. For in the soul there are no parts or elements of dissolution like in our bodies. Once created, the soul is by its nature immortal. Now what is the end and purpose of this creation? It is that we should share with God for eternity His own happiness, after a life on earth devoted to His service. For this He gave us minds capable of knowing Him, that rendering Him the tribute of praise and honour we see He so deserves

and which is at once our privilege and duty, we would be admitted to see the unbounded splendour of His Being, and enjoy the vision of it for ever. "But the just shall go into life everlasting" (Matt. xxv, 46). "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord" (Matt. xxv, 21). As God is our beginning by creation, He is our last end, in whose vision we will find eternal rest.

And indeed we can understand that an end less grand would not suffice. For if we are taken from so high a model, anything below that original cannot satisfy us. Hence the final destiny of the soul must consist in seeing God and loving Him, i.e., in the complete satisfaction of our highest faculties. The eye which is not satisfied with seeing and the ear which is not satisfied with hearing must be satisfied somewhere. The mind which looks out incessantly, inquiring in all directions, must be satisfied with knowing. The will, which covets what is pleasing in all things and fails to find it, must at last reach the goal that will leave nothing further to wish for, else these desires were planted in us in vain, not to say to be our torment. Now God alone, the Infinite Truth and the Infinite Good, can satisfy these conditions. To see Him in His beauty with no veils between, and to enjoy possession of Him for ever is the adequate destiny of man. Just as the happiness of God consists in seeing to the full His own Divine Perfections, and possessing them in Himself, our happiness will consist in seeing in our measure the Divine and Everlasting Beauty which is God, and possessing Him as our own for ever

also. "I Myself shall be your reward exceeding great" (Gen. xv, 1).

This being the final destiny or last end of man, what is our duty meanwhile? Our duty manifestly is so to order our life that to reach this end will be its just and fitting termination. Now two things are required for this—first to know that this is indeed our end; and next, knowing it, to practise what will lead us to it. For intelligent beings, not by a necessity of nature or blind instinct like the animal, but by knowledge and a will to act in accordance with knowledge, reach their destiny and attain their end. And here again we find how God has left nothing wanting to us, for He has not left us in a matter of so great importance to the slow and uncertain efforts of our own powers for definite knowledge, but has Himself made known to us all we need to know, and much more besides, while He has provided helps sufficient to make the issue certain for us, if we only wish. Now all God's teaching and all these aids He has entrusted to the care of the Holy Catholic Church—an Institution founded and endowed on purpose by Our Saviour, to help and guide us on our way to heaven.

CHAPTER III.

The Word of God.

In what form does the Church present God's teaching to us? In other words where shall we find what God has taught? What God has taught is put before us in various ways by the Church, but we may say the original and the principal source of God's teaching is the Bible, or the Scriptures. The Scriptures, it is true, are not an exhaustive source of God's teaching, for all that God has revealed has not been directly committed to writing, nor on the other hand has anything He wished to be known, been lost or forgotten. What is not contained in the Scriptures (and this is particularly true of Our Lord's own teaching) we have in the living voice of His Church as she instructs her children from age to age, and we find it also in those sacred writers, who during the centuries of her existence have expounded, one after another, the various points of revealed doctrine. The Fathers of the Church in the early ages, and the Doctors in the more recent centuries, in the works they have left us, are sources of the word of God. But the great repository of God's teaching is the Bible, and it is a repository rather than a systematic exposition of divine truth.

This book, the Bible, is divided into two main parts or divisions, according as it was written either before or after the coming of Our Saviour. All that was written before the coming of our Redeemer and which

is largely prophetical, constitutes what is called the Old Testament. What follows after His coming is the New Testament. Both parts are made up of the works of several writers. Each writer, whether of the Old or New Testament, whatever his subject, had a purpose of his own in writing, and had special information to convey. In dealing with his subject, whether it was history, or prophecy, or dogma, or laying down precepts on religious or moral subjects, many things were touched upon by the author in the course of his argument. Hence it happens that the pages of the Sacred Scriptures are strewn over with gems of divine truth, without any special order or studied regularity, like the flowers in a field, or the stars in the firmament. And just as in human sciences learned men have catalogued, and classified, and mapped out the different departments of knowledge, and given us learned treatises on various subjects, e.g., botany and astronomy, etc., so sacred writers, from the study of the Scriptures and other sources, make up their treatises on the different branches of revealed doctrine. But the Scriptures themselves were written at the suggestion and guidance of the Holy Ghost. "The holy men of God spoke, inspired by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter i, 21). They were composed under His inspiration, and they convey His message. The form they took, and the style in which they were written were personal to the writers, and we may say that these are the principal personal or human elements in them. But they propound no theories, and they debate no problems; they state their facts, or make their statements "Like one speaking with authority." These facts and statements, divine and

supernatural truths, as often as not, are set amidst earthly surroundings, as when the subject is history, or moral questions, and are expressed in language not always too explicit, especially in the case of prophecy. Hence in dealing with the Scriptures, the necessity of something more than learned writers and learned treatises, such as we have above referred to; the necessity of a Divine Guide to lead us safely amidst heights often so elevated above the level of men. And for this purpose God has given us the Church, the organ of the Holy Ghost, who Himself is the source of the inspiration and the author of the Scriptures, to deliver to us with safety and security what "God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spoke in times past to the Fathers by the Prophets—last of all hath spoken to us by His Son" (St. Paul—Heb. i, 1, 2).

We can easily see what a blessing, that God has been pleased to become Himself our Teacher, especially on such subjects as He has chosen to instruct us in. For He has taught us what concerns us most to know, and what concerns us most to be certain about, that is, He has taught us about Himself, and about ourselves in reference to Him. He has taught us what our chief business in life is, and He has made known to us what destiny awaits us when life is ended, and several other things that are useful and necessary for us. Natural knowledge and the natural sciences, which help so much in acquiring human knowledge, He has not concerned Himself with. "This painful occupation has God given to the children of men, to be exercised therein" (Eccles. i, 13). But the things of God, which men could never know with that

certainty and fullness which is desirable, He was pleased Himself to make known, and clear up for us.

Thus, He has put us at ease on the points about which we should otherwise be uneasy, at the same time that He has widened the range of knowledge beyond the limits of human effort. The result is that people who are instructed in revealed doctrine—in the truths of religion and conduct, have a knowledge of sacred things that is surprising. They have a knowledge of God, of His attributes, and of what relates to Him, that surpasses incomparably what was known to the most learned of the ancients. Our relations also with God—that He is our Creator; that His Divine Son redeemed us; the Fall of our First Parents—our descent from them; our duties to God, and how He would have us serve Him, and the rewards and punishments for faithful or unfaithful service; and a thousand and one things that are useful or necessary for us to know so as to make the best use of our life, and make our condition happy in a future state, the existence and nature of which, too, He has clearly announced to us—all these, and such like things God has taught us.

Now, while there is no question about the importance to us of the knowledge of these truths, there is little doubt, on the other hand, that had God not been pleased to provide this knowledge ready to our hand, many would have lived and died without it—would not have known why they lived at all, and what fate awaited them after death. For with the best gifts and under the most favouring circumstances, men are not at all too certain, nor do they hold the same views, about many things that are much more easily within their

reach than such questions as the Scriptures treat of. Hence, if these questions were left to ourselves to solve there would be much uncertainty on the very points on which it is of vital importance that we should be certain. Then, when we consider the demands made upon most people by their duties in life, the slenderness of the mental gifts of many, the lack of suitable education and opportunities of most, and even the want of interest in such questions that so commonly prevails, one may well conclude that the highest service was done us when God looked down upon the world with compassion, and breaking the cloud that hid Him from our minds, spoke in human language these divine and important truths. And since He has spoken, our ground is sure—we know where we stand. It matters little to us what He speaks about, whether above or below our capacity, for with God nothing is obscure, nothing is uncertain ; with Him nothing is a mystery ; all things are open before His mind like the pages of a book. Before His intelligence everything is more clear than the sun at noonday. It matters little to us, therefore, whether what He speaks lies within or without the range of our competence. His word is a better guarantee to us of the truth of what He says than our own knowledge of it, did we know it, or the conviction of all created intelligences together. Moreover, out of His goodness He has made known whatever He has revealed, and His sanctity is as great as His knowledge is perfect. Well, then, might He claim, and well might we pay Him, the tribute of our poor intelligence, by accepting, on His word, with unquestioning certainty, whatever He has taught, no matter how incomprehensible to us.

And it is not mysteries alone which God has taught, us: He has made known not only truths to believe but precepts to observe. What we have to do and what to avoid, He has declared to us. We feel, it is true, what is correct and what is not, in many things. But this is not so clear to us at all times, nor to everyone, and in many critical situations the path of duty is obscured, and shadowed to almost every mind. By His Commandments God has cleared up our path with a flood of light, and making a command of what to do and what to avoid—while He puts the merit of obedience thus in our way when we do what He commands, not alone because it is right but because He commands it—He has made the knowledge of what is right to do, and what we should avoid, all the more certain to us. For surely that is the proper course for us which God commands.

The question is sometimes asked if God requires us to believe what we cannot understand in the things He has revealed. The answer is: Why not, if He has made it known to us? No one asks if an ignorant man ought to believe what a very learned man teaches him, even though he cannot understand it. And surely the mind of man is not the measure of all truth. If He, then, who knows and understands all things is pleased to reveal what is above our capacity, what reason is there that we should hesitate to believe it? Is it that God could make a mistake, and we could correct Him? Or, if He could not mistake, that He meant to deceive us, by requiring us to believe what He knew was not true. But why should Almighty God act in this way with us, even if He would? Does the Truth Eternal,

and Goodness Infinite, and Power Omnipotent, and the only Independent, depend upon or would He accept a mistaken service of this kind at the hands of His creatures? And surely it is not for a purpose of this sort that He spontaneously created us, and that to His own likeness, and destined us to share in His own happiness, viz., of seeing the Eternal Truth unveiled, and possessing it in security for ever. Rather does He reveal His Sacred Truths to us so that we should have a knowledge of them which we should otherwise never attain: a knowledge that will one day burst forth into the fullness of vision, when faith will give place to seeing, and our longing for truth will be satisfied to the full.

In the actual condition of human knowledge or science at any period, it may be difficult to reconcile something that people hold on certain subjects with what God has revealed. But time has ever shown that with a wider and fuller knowledge, and a more perfect insight into things, there is no contradiction between the revelations of Faith and the findings of science in its more advanced and accurate conclusions. In reference to Faith, one thing only is necessary to know, and that is not whether we could of ourselves find out what it teaches, or whether it is easily reconciled with what we know already, or if we can understand it anyhow, but whether or not God has revealed it. Once we are certain on that point, the least that is due of us to the Eternal Truth and Knowledge and Holiness of God, is to take on His word as unquestionably certain whatever He reveals, leaving it to less reverent and less dutiful minds to question

and to disbelieve. Now these truths which God revealed when He spoke, as St. Paul says, "at sundry times, to the Fathers, by the Prophets, and last of all when He spoke by His Divine Son," and His Apostles, and which are found scattered over the Bible, or are made known to us by traditional teaching, the Church sets before us in a much condensed form, at least the fundamental truths and those most essential to believe, in what is known as the Apostles' Creed.

CHAPTER IV.

The Apostles' Creed.

ARTICLE I.

Since what God has revealed is for the most part above what we can comprehend, and hence is a matter to be believed rather than to be understood, the Apostles' Creed, as it is called, is a profession of faith in the truths of Divine revelation, of which the Apostles are the authors. One explanation of the Apostolic origin of the Creed is this: the Apostles had to go out from Jerusalem to preach the Gospel over the world. They were not likely, all of them, to meet again, but whether or not, it was desirable that there should be a formula, decisive, authentic, and comprehensive at the same time, to which all could refer, as an authoritative summary

of the doctrines which were preached throughout the world. Now whether the Creed was actually drawn up by the Apostles, and made use of by them, or was drawn up later by their disciples, who took it from the use and practice of the Apostles, matters little. It is an authentic summary in either case of the teaching of the men who were the disciples of Our Lord, who had their doctrine immediately from Him, and who, moreover, were commissioned by Him to preach it to the world. And in a matter of such importance to the Church, whose existence depended on the genuineness of her Apostolic teaching at all times, there was little chance of any formula pretending to embrace that teaching gaining general acceptance, that had not sufficient to vouch for its authenticity from the first day it appeared.

As the Apostles' Creed stands to-day, it may indeed contain an article or two, perhaps, not to be found in the earliest form of it that has come down to us; with this exception it is identical, almost word for word from beginning to end, with the oldest form of the Creed that is extant. This most ancient form of the Apostles' Creed goes back to the first centuries of Christianity, and is said to have been used by St. Peter, in his day, in Rome. When we find this old form of the Creed in the second century, it is not a formula brought into use only at that time; it was known even then as the Apostles' Creed, which is sufficient evidence, taking the importance of the matter into account, that it really had been in use by the Apostles, and that they were its authors. So we have to this day in the Creed the self-same profession of faith in which the Apostles embodied the teaching of Christ.

There is nothing about which the Church has been more solicitous. It is the formula of her faith, which she teaches to her children, and it is the profession of faith which she teaches them to make in the daily recital of their prayers. And all over the world the members of the Church, day after day, when they kneel to pray, and recite the Creed of the Apostles, make profession of their belief in the teaching of our Saviour as the Apostles embodied it in that cherished formula which runs as follows :

The Apostles' Creed.—I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth ; and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord ; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary ; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried ; He descended into hell ; the third day He rose again from the dead ; He ascended into heaven ; sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty ; from thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost ; the Holy Catholic Church ; the Communion of Saints ; the forgiveness of sins ; the resurrection of the body ; and life everlasting. Amen.

It is well, however, to notice here that there are other Creeds recognized by the Church as well as the Apostles' Creed. There is the Nicæan Creed ; the Creed which is said in the Mass, and the Athanasian Creed. This last takes its name from St. Athanasius—its reputed author, who was Bishop of Alexandria, and died about A.D. 373. The Creed said in the Mass was composed at a Council held at Constantinople, and the Nicæan Creed was made at the Council of Nicæa, held in A.D. 325. All these Creeds differ from the

Apostles' Creed and from each other, only in being an amplification of the original, by means of a more explicit statement of one or other doctrine, which was already, though not so clearly expressed, in the Apostles' Creed. Express mention is made of these doctrines in the later Creeds, because they give the definitions of the Councils which were held on purpose to expound the Church's teaching on these points.

In the Apostles' Creed the great fundamental truths of revelation are expressly declared. These are not alone the fundamental truths of revelation, but of true religion also, which, if one does not know, he can neither have true faith nor true worship, "For he that cometh to God, must believe that He is, and is the rewarder of them that seek Him." (Heb. xi). No one can turn to God to worship Him who does not know that He is; nor can he pray to Him with hope and trust if he does not know that he has a claim on His attention. Now these points are satisfied by the words "I believe in God . . . the Creator of heaven and earth." Nor can anyone worship God, as a Christian, who is ignorant of Christ our Saviour, and hence do the mysteries of the Incarnation, the Death, and the Resurrection of our Saviour get separate mention in that Creed, which is at once the most condensed and yet the most comprehensive epitome of doctrine the world has ever known. Many revealed truths are not so necessary to be known as the above fundamental truths; hence they are not expressly mentioned in the Creed. They are contained, however, in the wide and comprehensive formula "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church." To the Church is

entrusted the teaching of its Founder. To believe her teaching is to believe whatever God has taught.

Article II.

In the opening words of the Creed we profess our belief in God. As there can be no true faith and no true worship, unless we know God whom we worship and to whom we address our prayers, the first and fundamental profession which a true believer has to make is his belief in God. And though the Jews at all times, above all other people, had the true knowledge of and belief in God, the Apostles, whose mission was to Jew and Pagan equally, and whose duty it was to bring all men to the knowledge and worship of the one true God, laid down the doctrine of the one true God, the Creator of heaven and earth, at the beginning of their preaching, and at the head of their Creed. In their day there were no more mistaken notions than those that were prevalent everywhere in reference to God. The pagan mind could not grasp the idea of a God embracing in Himself all the perfections that men associate with His name. These they divided out amongst a number of minor divinities, and hence the polytheism of paganism. But the Apostles, charged with the duty of preaching to the world the truths which God Himself revealed, made this doctrine of the one true God, the Creator of heaven and earth, the fundamental article of their preaching, and the first doctrine of their Creed. Hence, when we find St. Paul, for example, addressing the citizens of Athens, this was the doctrine he specially

preached to them "Upraiding them for their superstition in worshipping a number of gods, the unknown God amongst them." He preached the true "God who made the world, and all things therein, He being Lord of heaven and earth" (Acts xvii, 24). And hence also when the Apostles drew up their Creed, which was a summary of their whole teaching, and which all Christians should profess, they gave the first place in it to this most essential doctrine of the one only God, the Creator of heaven and earth.

It is hardly necessary to quote the Scriptures in support of this doctrine, and to show that it was not new to the Jews anyway when the Apostles preached it. The idea of one God, the Creator of all things, and to whom all men must account for their deeds, runs throughout the Scriptures from beginning to end. It is expressly stated in many places both in the Old Testament and the New, and because of the prevalence of this idea throughout every organ of Christian teaching, there is no truth of a more universal acceptance amongst civilized people. The Jew, and the Mohammedan—who, too, took this truth from the Bible—as well as the Christian, accept the doctrine of one true God. And while heresy attacked now one, now another, and again almost every doctrine of revealed religion, no professing Christian ever questioned the doctrine of the One true God. "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is One God," said Moses, in Deuteronomy (Ch. vi, 4). "Who is God but the Lord, and who is strong but our God" (2 Sam. xxii, 32). "O Lord! our God . . . . Thou art the Lord, the only God" (4 Kings xix, 19). "Knowest thou not or hast thou

not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God who hath created the ends of the earth" (Isaias xl, 28). "I am God, and there is no other" (Isaias, xlv, 22). "There is one God and there is no other besides Him" (Mark xii, 32). "That they may know Thee the only true God" (John xvii, 3). These references taken from various parts of the Old Testament and the New, show what was the teaching of the word of God at all times, and what was the faith of all true believers at every age of the world. And the last quotation from St. John, which is really a prayer of Our Lord to His Eternal Father, at the close of His life, shows what was His anxiety that this saving truth should never lose its hold on the minds of His followers. Now what Our Saviour handed on from the Old Testament teaching, and what He found prevalent among all the Jews of His day, the Apostles preached as they received it from His lips, and placed it in the first line of the Creed, and so passed it on to the Church—"I believe in God . . . the Creator of heaven and earth."

Article III.

The next doctrine of the Creed, and one which ranks in importance with the first is, that there are Three Persons in God, viz., the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. In the Creed, this mystery of the Blessed Trinity, as it is called, is not declared in one single statement. A separate declaration, rather, is made in reference to each of the Three Persons: "I believe in God the Father Almighty," "And in Jesus Christ,

His only Son, our Lord," and after a little, "I believe in the Holy Ghost." Now, here we are face to face with the great distinguishing truth of the Christian revelation. To believe in the Blessed Trinity, and to know that there are Three Divine Persons in God, is amongst the many great blessings which the world owes to the teaching of our Saviour. For whatever may be claimed as to our power to find out, after a certain amount of patient and honest inquiry, many truths about the being and the nature of God, there is no claim, or foundation for a claim, as to our being ever capable of even suspecting the Trinity of Persons in God. In the Old Testament itself no clear reference seems to have been made to it. Whether on account of the well-known proclivity of the Jews to lapse into the errors of their neighbours, who all worshipped a number of false gods, or for what other reason, it does not seem that it appeared good to God to reveal to the people generally this wonderful mystery of the divine nature. Likely enough the prophets, who received so many and such great revelations, and who foretold so much about the coming Redeemer—the Second Divine Person—and who spoke under the direct influence of the Holy Ghost, had themselves a distinct knowledge and explicit belief in the Blessed Trinity. It was different with the body of the people. The God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob—the God of their fathers, who in times past wrought so many wonders in their favour, was the object of their worship. Jehovah they knew, and they reverenced His name, but the knowledge of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, they did not possess. This Mystery of

the Divine Nature they did not even suspect. It was reserved to Our Blessed Saviour to make the fuller exposition of the hidden mysteries of the Divine Being of God which this great truth discloses, and to require henceforth from all true believers explicit faith in it.

The revelation of this mystery of the Blessed Trinity is an evidence of the progression there has been in the manifestation of sacred truths to the world. The belief of the Jews was an advance on the notions men formed to themselves about God, and about sacred things generally. The pagan idea about these things is evidence of this; but distorted as those ideas are, everywhere and always the idea of a Supreme Being is lodged in the minds of men, and nothing has been able to remove it. The sense of the existence and presence of God seems almost an instinct of nature. His power and goodness, and many of His attributes reveal themselves more or less clearly to every well-disposed mind. But no mind, no matter how well disposed, no matter how favoured by circumstances, or endowed by nature, could so fathom the depths of the Divinity as to come to believe in Three Divine Persons, each of them God. It is the nearest approach to a contradiction in terms, and could not be known except as a result of a special revelation. The Blessed Trinity means Three Person in God—each Person God. And though the Persons are multiplied the Divinity is not multiplied, but is identically the same in all Three Persons. This mystery of mysteries is beyond the dreams of men. What does the fuller manifestation of the Divine Nature reveal that is given to the Blessed.

Now this mystery of the Blessed Trinity is distinctly enough declared in the teaching of our Blessed Saviour. He spoke frequently of the Eternal Father. "As the Father sent Me," He says. "If I do not the work of My Father" (John x, 37). "Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in My name that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son" (John xiv, 13). But Father and Son do not imply identity of substance if Divinity of Persons. This identity is more clearly indicated when He said: "I am in the Father and the Father in Me," and again: "He that seeth Me seeth the Father also" (John xiv, 9, 11). But more expressly still when He said: "I and the Father are one" (John x, 30), one in nature, yet different Persons. "I and the Father are one."

But, there is yet another Person divine as the Father and the Son, and the words of our Saviour, and indeed all the books of the New Testament, make frequent mention of Him, viz., the Holy Ghost. The office and functions assigned in the Scriptures to the Holy Ghost, and especially those assigned to Him by Our Blessed Saviour, indicate clearly enough that He is a Person of equal rank with the Father and the Son. Through His agency the mystery of the Incarnation takes place (Luke i). He descends upon Our Saviour at His baptism. He is promised to the Apostles to make them equal to the mission assigned to them (by our Saviour) of preaching the Gospel, establishing the Church and administering its manifold offices, and He is to remain with the Church for ever. Our Lord describes Him as another Paraclete in His own stead, and who but a divine Person could take the

place of our Lord to His Apostles? "But when the Paraclete cometh whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth who proceedeth from the Father" (John xv, 26). That He proceeds from the Son as well as from the Father, the Apostles taught, and the Church believed at all times, and when denied she expressly defined it: "Who proceeds from the Father and the Son. (*Council of Constantinople*). That He is a distinct Person possessing the same Divine Nature with the Father and the Son, Our Lord made known to us when He ordered the Apostles to associate His name with Theirs in admitting the converts to the Church: "Baptising them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. xxviii, 19). This association of the Holy Ghost with the Father and the Son in the sacred and solemn rite by which people are admitted to membership of the "Kingdom of God on earth," i.e., the Church—by which people become the children of God, and heirs to His eternal Kingdom—proclaims the Holy Ghost on an equality with the Father and the Son, and therefore a Divine Person as They. And St. John in his first epistle tells us "There are three who give testimony in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one."

From the days of the Apostles this has been the teaching of the Church. The three Divine Persons are associated in honour in that prayer which is perhaps the oldest in use both in the liturgy and in the devotions of the faithful: "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost." And in the public prayers of the faithful, when we trace upon ourselves the

sign of our Redemption—the Sign of the Cross—we do it in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. As each of the three Divine Persons is God, and the only God, all that is included in the Divine Nature is identical in each Person, as the Divinity itself is the same in each. It is not, then, that they are alike in power and wisdom, but the power, etc., of each and all is the one self-same, viz., the power of God, which in Him is identified with Himself; yet, at the same time, one Person is not another Person, for the three Adorable Persons are distinct from each other. The Son was born of the Father from eternity, "Who being the brightness of His glory and the figure of His substance" (Heb. i, 3), and the Holy Ghost proceedeth from both eternally, while the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are the one same God.

More than all else, this mystery of the Being of God surpasses our comprehension, and knowing it, it shows how God surpasses all things else we know. And for a pious believer, it comes as a source of the greatest satisfaction, that the God whom we worship and adore is not one who can be measured by our minds, or by any created intelligence, but that He towers away infinitely beyond our reach, not so much with the mysteries of creation and design, but with the deeper and ever deeper depths of His own unfathomable essence.

There is a reflection, however faint, of the Blessed Trinity in the human soul: a spiritual substance with its triple powers of intelligence, memory and will. The one soul remembers, wills, and understands. But whereas in God each Person is God, the memory, mind,

and will are not the soul, but faculties of it. So far does the Uncreated and Eternal and Infinite surpass the finite, the temporal, and the created. And as the angel whom St. Augustine found emptying the ocean with a shell was attempting the impossible, so would we be taught it is waste of time to try to sound the depths of the mysteries of the Divine Nature that exist in the three distinct Persons, to adore and worship whom is our appropriate function, as it should be our pleasing duty.

The mystery of the Blessed Trinity is denied and ignored by the Mohammedan, who believes in one God, incommunicable in nature, and by that small sect of Protestants called Unitarians, and who like the Mohammedan deny the Divinity of our Saviour. But the Church, whose faith and teaching is preserved from error by the presiding guardianship of the Holy Spirit, laid down at the Fourth Council of Lateran, held in 1215, what Christians are to hold, and indeed ever held in this as in the First Article of the Creed, in the following words: "We define that there is but one true God alone, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, Three Persons indeed, but only one essence, substance, or simple nature, and that all Three Persons are consubstantial, omnipotent, and coeternal, the one beginning of all things."

In the work of our Redemption a special part is assigned to each of the Divine Persons—the Father, or First Person, sent us the Redeemer: "God so loved the world as to send His only begotten Son" (John iii, 16). The Son took the work of our Redemption upon Himself, with all the condescension and humiliation it

implied: "(Christ Jesus) came into this world to save sinners" (1 Tim. i, 15), while our Sanctification, i.e., the application to us of the effects of the merits of our Redemption, is assigned to the Holy Ghost. For this was He sent.

Article IV.

The Incarnation.

The next great truth of the Apostles' Creed is the mystery of the Incarnation, viz., that God the Son the Second Divine Person became Man. The Blessed Trinity tells us how God exists in Himself, telling of the manner of the Divine existence. The Incarnation tells us of something external to God: the taking of the nature of man to a personal union with God the Son. The Blessed Trinity means that there are Three Persons in the One Divine Nature; the Incarnation, that there are two distinct natures in the One Divine Person —the infinite nature of God and the finite nature of man, united in the Person of God the Son. Though joined in the closest possible union, each nature retains its own characteristics and ways. The human nature, notwithstanding such intimate union with the divine, is neither fused in it, absorbed by it, nor altered, but remains itself: changed neither in its substance, properties, or peculiarities. It is exalted of course in being allied to a divine instead of a human personality, but it is human in every fibre of its being, and to the utmost depths of its soul. And as Our Saviour does the acts of a man, as He walks, or speaks, or thinks, it is the Son of God that walks, and speaks, and thinks, in

a human body and a human mind. For as our actions are not the actions of any special part, but of the person acting through that part—a man speaks with his tongue, walks with his feet, and thinks with his mind—and since the person in the case of Our Lord is not a human but the Divine Person of God the Son, it was God the Son that was speaking when our Saviour spoke; it was God the Son that felt in His Divine Heart for men; it was God the Son who died in His humanity when our Saviour was nailed to the Cross. In that way the Divine Person of our Lord gave a divine, i.e. an infinite value to even the least of His human actions.

His actions indeed were human, because done in human nature, and had their form from it—He spoke with a human voice, but He who spoke with a human voice was the Son of God. It was a divine voice also, not because of the nature of the voice but because of the Person who spoke. What a combination of the human and divine in the self-same Person!

To preserve the humanity of Our Lord in the identity of its nature, while personally united to the divine nature of God the Son, is one of the mysteries of the Incarnation. But the Incarnation itself is a greater mystery still. The Infinite and Everlasting God taking to Himself the weak and limited nature of man, and living amongst men, as if He were only a being of yesterday like other men! And what delicate adjustment to fit the unbounded and ubiquitous and omnipotent to the limited, circumscribed, and weak proportions of human nature. And He acted the part so well, as is well known from His life, that He passed His days among men who could not believe that He was anything other

or better than themselves. And now we come to ask why the Incarnation, and why conceal the identity that is so withdrawn from notice? God the Son became man to atone for our sins, and to save us from the punishment we deserve for them. What a revelation of divine goodness and love! "God so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son" (John iii, 16). This mystery of the Incarnation is a new ground for our service of God. Even if our salvation was not the motive of the Incarnation, what greater mark of divine favour to any of His creatures than to associate their nature so intimately with His own divine nature in the Person of God the Son. "For nowhere doth He take hold of the Angels, but of the seed of Abraham He taketh hold," says St. Paul (Heb. ii, 16). And the union so established with the humanity of Our Blessed Saviour has never been interrupted, and never will be: "Jesus Christ yesterday, to-day, and the same for ever!" (Heb. xiii, 8).

If we pay the tribute of our grateful service to God for calling us, not "from darkness into His marvellous light" (1 Peter ii, 9), but from nothing to conscious being, it is surely a new reason for our devoted worship, that He has so honoured us. But the Incarnation was not a question of doing us honour, it was rather a necessary condition for our salvation. "For us men, and for our salvation He came down from Heaven and was made Flesh" (*Creed*).

Now if the Incarnation of the Son of God is the necessary condition on which man's salvation is based, it follows that the knowledge of the Incarnation is necessary if we are to attain salvation. Men are not led

to action, for any end or purpose, by instinct or blind impulse, like the animals. On the contrary, whatever men do, or have done, that is worthy of them, that redounds to their credit or advantage—everything that men achieved, great and small, has been brought about by the action of their mind and will on the causes from which such things proceed. There is no reason, therefore, to believe that the greatest of all purposes and ends can be gained on other terms. Quite the contrary. "He who created you", says St. Augustine, "without your help, will not save you without it." Men must know, then, the prime cause of their salvation—the mystery of the Incarnation, and make such use of the knowledge of it as we are taught to do if we would succeed in the greatest of all our undertakings—that of securing our eternal salvation. Our Lord Himself made this clear to us when He said: "Now this is eternal life: that they may know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent" (John xvii, 3). To know Jesus Christ is itself eternal life, which seems to say that one who knows Jesus Christ will not fail to attain eternal life. As we must know the mysteries of the Unity and Trinity of God, we must know the Incarnation of God the Son.

Article V.

The Death of Our Saviour.

After the Incarnation, the next great truth of the Creed is that Jesus Christ our Lord suffered and died on the Cross to redeem and save us. Though the

Incarnation is a great mystery of divine condescension, one great effect of which was to give infinite value to the most trivial human action of our Lord, in the scheme of man's redemption it was only a means to an end. Our redemption was not effected when the Incarnation had taken place. Nor did any act of Our Saviour's life, no matter how important or meritorious because done by the Son of God, effect our redemption. We owe our redemption, or in other words, Christ redeemed us from sin and the punishment due to it, not by His penitential virtues and meritorious life, but by the sacrifice of His life itself upon the cross. "We were reconciled to God by the death of His Son" (Rom. v, 10). "He that spared not even His own Son but delivered Him up for us all" (Rom. viii, 32). "If one died for all, then all were dead, and Christ died for all" (2 Cor. v, 14, 15). And writing earlier to the Corinthians, St. Paul said: "Christ died for our sins" (1 Cor. xv, 3). To state so wonderful, a fact as this is to declare that whatever else may not be known, this must be known by all men. This one truth is an epitome of all it concerns us most to know. What a revelation of God to man does it not make! What can tell us of the evil sin is, like this truth—that only by the sacrifice of the life of the Son of God was it atoned for. And how dreadful the consequences of sin to us—God the Son came down from heaven, became Man, and died on the Cross in order to save us from them. "The Son of Man came to give His life a redemption for many" (Matt. xx, 28). And as these great mysteries are the founts and sources of salvation, the hope to which all look forward and for which all must labour, the knowledge of these mysteries is at once the most

necessary, useful, and appropriate, for all men, for "Christ died for all." One may ask, indeed, can one be saved who is ignorant of these mysteries. Whether a blameless ignorance is more than a misfortune, depriving one of the knowledge of this pearl of great price, or constitutes of itself a condition incompatible with salvation, may not be so clear; but it is certain, at any rate, that to know the mysteries of the Incarnation and Death of our Saviour is required of every Christian, and faith in these mysteries is an essential condition for salvation; nor is there anything instructed Christians should be more zealous to spread abroad than the knowledge of these remarkable mysteries, and this, not alone to help in the most effective way the salvation of others, but to make known the wonderful goodness of God.

Article VI.

The Resurrection of Our Saviour.

After the Incarnation and Death of our Saviour, the next mystery of the Creed, and one nearly allied to these, is the Resurrection of Our Saviour. The Resurrection means that Our Lord, on the third day after He was crucified, rose in body and soul, glorious and immortal, from the dead. It was not, then, that He came back again to life as Lazarus did, whom He raised from the dead. Rising from the dead, His soul and body received the fullness of immortal glory, to which His obedience unto death entitled Him. He became at once, then, and for ever, beyond the reach of suffering, whether of mind or body, free from all infirmity and the

possibility of death. " Christ rising from the dead dieth now no more ; death shall no longer have dominion over Him." (Rom. vi, 9). " He humbled Himself becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross, for which cause God hath exalted Him . . . and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father " (Phil. ii, 8, 9). Dying for our sins, as St. Paul says, our Saviour obtained for us redemption ; for Himself immortal glory. And this strikes us as being entirely in accordance with the fitness of things. It was reaching the extreme of things surely, when the Author of life, even in an assumed nature came to die. It was natural to Him to live, and not to die ; and having died for a special purpose, what more natural than that He should come back again to life when that purpose was achieved. That He came back, not to such a life as He laid down, but to a glorious and immortal life, is only in accordance with His merits, and what was to be expected when His life here was over. He was not, surely, to live now except after the manner and condition of the future life. His life was spent ; His work was done ; what He came for was accomplished. He was now to receive the reward of His obedience and His sacrifice. And His reward must not be confined to one part of His being. It must be extended to every part, to His body as to His soul. Nor could the reward be delayed : " nor wilt Thou give Thy Holy One to see corruption." (Ps. xv, 10), and hence on the morning of the third day after His death He arose to a glorious and immortal life. He might indeed have risen at once, as far as our redemption was concerned ; He paid the price by dying ; no

more was due on that account. But our Lord would have no doubt possible about the reality of His death. Hence He delayed His Resurrection to the third day, and thus would He verify His own prediction, when He said: "They will put Him to death, and on the third day He shall rise again" (Luke xviii, 33). As to the fact of His Resurrection on the third day, the Gospels are witness, which detail the circumstances, as will be seen in its proper place in a subequent chapter.

We have now gone through the fundamental truths, or the Principal Mysteries of Religion, which are contained in the Creed. These are the fundamental truths of revealed religion, and divine Faith. To know these Five Mysteries is to know much about God, and about His mysterious and incomparable nature. All else we can learn in the Catechism or elsewhere is but a further illustration of the wondrous goodness and love that brought the Son of God down from Heaven, clothed Him with our nature, and led Him to ascend the Hill of Calvary to die for our redemption.

What follows in the Creed after the mystery of our Lord's Ascension, which is itself but the completion of His Resurrection, will be explained in its proper place in subsequent chapters. The Death and Resurrection of our Saviour, we said, took place on account of sin. What is sin, and how came it into the world? To explain the introduction of sin into the world, and its prevalence amongst men, we must go back to the beginning of things again, and recall the creation of man, and the position in which our First Parents were originally placed.

CHAPTER V.

Our First Parents : Adam and Eve.

In the order of creation, the last thing that God created was man. Long after the heavens and the earth were made, and only when the slow, if steady, action of the laws He had laid down for the development of things, had brought the world to that state of perfection which it has retained ever since, in which it could afford suitable accommodation for the requirements of human life, God created the first man and woman, and He did it in this way : He formed the body of Adam, the first man, out of the earth, after the type familiar to us. And as this body lay lifeless before Him, He breathed into its face the breath of life—the soul, and the first man stood on his feet a living being (Gen. ii, 7). "And the Lord God formed man of the slime of the earth, and breathed into his face the breath of life, and man became a living soul." "Then the Lord God cast a deep sleep upon Adam, and when he was fast asleep, He took one of his ribs and filled up flesh for it, and the Lord God built the rib which He took from Adam into a woman" (Gen. ii, 21). "And the Lord God had planted a paradise of pleasure from the beginning wherein He placed man whom He had formed" (Gen. ii, 8).

To man thus formed He gave authority and ownership over everything around him, on land and sea and air, and he endowed Him with gifts of mind and body suitable to the lord of so grand a dominion,

for He made him after the pattern of Himself. " And He said : Let us make man to our own image and likeness, and let him have dominion over the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and the beasts, and the whole earth. And God created man to His own image " (Gen.i,26,27). We have evidence of what powers of mind He endowed the first man with, in the following passage : " And the Lord God having formed out of the ground all the beasts of the earth and all the fowls of the air, brought them to Adam to see what he would call them, for whatsoever Adam called any living creature the same is its name. And Adam called all the beasts by their names, and all the fowls of the air, and all the cattle of the field " (Gen. ii, 19, 20).

Erect in form, and enlightened in mind, there was perfect harmony in the action of the higher and lower elements of which he was composed. His body was the fitting and ready instrument of his soul, while the soul directed without effort every movement of the body. " Only this have I found that God made man right " (Eccles. vii). Master of his own movements and the action of all his members, with the power of mind to recognize at sight the nature of everything around him, and with all outside creation subject and subservient to him, well might it be said : " Thou hast made him a little less than the Angels, and hast set him over the works of Thy hands " (Psalm viii). This perfect harmony of mind and body, and the smooth and easy interaction of both, must be reckoned amongst the highest of man's primeval gifts.

As he came from the hands of his Creator, Adam had to complain of no " law of his members fighting

against the law of his mind," as St. Paul describes it, and of which all of us are conscious. All his passions were under the control of his reason, and in the pursuit of their various objects they were guided and governed by it. Sound in mind and body, he was liable to neither accident nor disease, and death was not to be known by him.

Such favours as these were obviously above the claims of nature, and were given to make man's life upon earth the happier. Nor was this all; his soul was clothed with sanctifying grace, a gift altogether supernatural. With grace he was raised to a supernatural state, and made capable of higher and more intimate relations with God. In the state of grace all his actions had a value altogether above the order of nature—a worth in the sight of God to which nature not so aided can lay no claim. For so great and so many favours it would not be surprising if some signal service were demanded in return. But no, God commanded him only to abstain from the fruit of a certain tree in the Garden of Paradise. This abstinence would be the expression of the duty of our First Parents towards their Creator, and the sign of their dependence upon Him for all the blessings they possessed. Nor were these gifts and blessings for themselves alone; they were intended for their descendants also, but they were not given absolutely. Their continuance was made dependent upon their duty and obedience to this precept. "And He commanded him saying: "Of every tree of Paradise thou shalt eat, but of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil thou shalt not eat. For in what day soever thou shalt eat of it thou

shall die the death" (Gen. ii, 16, 17). What could be more easy than to observe that precept! It was not a positive precept. It implied no action of any kind no matter how light. It only meant not to do a certain thing, and the tendency or temptation to do it was not a strong one. Our First Parents were really subject to no temptation which they could not quell in an instant, and without effort. Then when we remember what motives were present to their thoughts to give this token of dependence which God required, and how every feeling of gratitude strongly impelled them to it, it will ever be an astonishment how they failed in their duty. And to fail, in their circumstances, was a grievous failure. It is not so much what they did when they disobeyed, but what they did in such circumstances as were theirs, and knowing, as they did, the consequences of disobedience. "In what day soever thou shalt eat of it thou shalt die the death" (Gen. ii, 17). No greater penalty could be threatened. Yet notwithstanding all, when the tempter came and suggested to eat this forbidden fruit, instead of rejecting the suggestion with quick disdain, Eve first and Adam after her, gave ear to the temptation, and proved false to their duty. "And the serpent said: No, you shall not die the death. For God doth know that in what day soever you shall eat thereof your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods knowing good and evil" (Gen. iii, 4, 5). "And the woman saw that the tree was good to eat, and fair to the eyes, and delightful to behold, and she took of the fruit thereof and did eat, and gave to her husband who did eat, and the eyes of them both were

opened" (Gen. iii, 6, 7). Their eyes indeed were opened when they ate the forbidden fruit, but it was to see their mistake and shame. The guilt of our First Parents in all this unhappy incident was very great. The serpent gave the lie to God, and they listened to him. He represented God as deceiving them, and they seemed to credit him. He promised them that instead of dying they would, like gods, know good and evil, and they believed him, and transferring their allegiance from God to the tempter in search of a knowledge, as they thought, that God had withheld from them, they broke His commandment; but they found their mistake when it was too late. "The serpent deceived me," said Eve, when questioned about what she had done.

In the light of their fall one may infer that even in the absence of any express precept they would fail in their duty anyhow. For the duty of reverence and worship of his Creator is inherent in man's nature, and if a rational creature, as man is, and highly endowed moreover, as Adam was, failed when his duty was specified for him, it is not unreasonable to infer that in the absence of a specified and explicit command he would fail in his duty as well. Hence we may spare ourselves the trouble of puzzling over the question that is sometimes asked, viz.: Why God gave a command at all to our First Parents when He foresaw that they would break it. If He were to withhold His command for fear they would not respect it, He should either not create man at all, or if He created him He should create him not as we know him, i.e., free to obey or not, as he chose, but bound to his Creator's will

by an inevitable and compelling necessity. Now man is a free agent by nature, and he is an intelligent agent besides, who knows his duty and dependence, and his obligations to his Creator, and that self-same intelligence that reveals his dependence and his duty, makes known his obligation to acknowledge and respect it. A precept only makes the obligation more explicit, while it increases the guilt of refusing to acknowledge it. On the other hand there is neither credit on the one side, nor honour on the other, where necessity compels our service. Now God would have from an intelligent creature such as man, none but free and spontaneous obedience, such as is in keeping with his nature. For man is not a mere animal, impelled to action by instinct that leaves no choice, nor a machine, that by a mere compelling necessity has to act in a certain way. He is the master of his own actions, and the source of his own inspirations. This is the special dignity that God has given to us, and one can easily see that the voluntary service of one so constituted by nature, to one who is worthy of it, is a credit to him who renders it, as to him to whom it is rendered.

On the other hand, it was very fitting to give our First Parents a reminder that though the world was at their feet, and creation at their service, they too had one over them to whom they owed it all, and a duty and service to Him in return. Nor can we conceive it possible that such creatures as God had made them, could be allowed to lie, as it were, outside the province where duty to God was recognized and observed as a matter of course. Moreover,

the continued enjoyment of their great endowments, and the possession and enjoyment of the better and more enduring blessings of a future state, were all made the reward of service loyally rendered. Now, to put man in the way of meriting, even partially, blessings which were in the beginning a free gift, is doubly to endow him, by making these gifts henceforth partly due to him, because he has placed the condition necessary for retaining them.

Moreover, from first to last, man's stay here was only for a period of probation and merit. We are destined, not for temporary happiness in this world only, but for eternal happiness hereafter. To see and enjoy God in heaven is the final destiny of man. But no one shall, in God's decree, ever be admitted to that supreme happiness but he who has merited it. Not even the Angels were permitted to see God face to face as He is, except after trial. He will not be surrounded by courtiers who wear their crowns because of His munificence alone. They must have acquired the right to them on the ground of personal service and merit. "No one shall have glory everlasting but he that could have transgressed and did not transgress, and could do evil things and hath not done them" (Eccles. xxxi). And surely one cannot easily imagine a reward so great in return for so light and so easy a service.

On the other hand what a mercy of God that when our First Parents fell He did not cast them off at once, and without hope! They felt in themselves, indeed, at once the consequences of their fall; but He encouraged them with the assurance that their fall

was not irreparable. He even took from it, and from their helplessness to repair it, occasion to promise them a Redeemer, who would be descended from themselves, and who would atone for their misdeed, and the misdeeds of the world. "I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed; she shall crush thy head" (Gen. iii, 15). In the faith of this promise they took courage after their fall, and facing their altered circumstances with confidence, they tried to serve God during their days, and the tradition of their descendants is that they made a happy end. But what a change had come over them! All the gifts that had raised them up above everything around them, and above the due condition of their nature, were gone. The original innocence, in virtue of which, though fully grown man and woman, they were guileless as babes, was lost; their minds had no longer the clear intellectual light they enjoyed before. The will, which was above the allurements of passion, was weakened and inclined to evil. The passions, which hitherto were under the control of reason, now broke away and gained their natural independence. And the struggle to subdue these passions has ever since been the struggle of life; and victory over them, the victory of the virtuous.

Nor was the change in the condition of their bodies and their bodily health less noticeable. Instead of being indifferent to the elements, and unaffected by them, they became subject to them in every respect. Though in the world, by reason of their exceptional privileges hitherto, they could hardly be said to be dependent upon it; and nothing in the world up to the

Fall could molest or injure them. With the act of disobedience this state of things passed away, and in the presence of nature they were no less subject to its laws than the animals of the field. The wind and the rain, the heat and the cold, had their natural effect upon them now. They had to eat to support their life, and to have what to eat was henceforth to be the product of their labour. "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread" (Gen. iii, 19). Nor was a blessing given to the earth so as to make it yield more abundantly in answer to man's toil! On the contrary: "Cursed is the earth in thy work; with labour and toil shalt thou eat thereof all the days of thy life" (Gen. iii, 17).

They were put without the Garden of Paradise, and turned adrift upon the world, to make as best they could a living and a home: "And the Lord God sent him out of the paradise of pleasure, to till the earth from which he was taken" (Gen. iii, 23). And just as they felt the rebellion of the passions within them, they experienced the weakness of nature in other respects also—liability to injury and accident, to disease and death. And though in themselves, and in their early descendants, nature seems to have possessed a vitality and endurance that has long since passed away, for they counted their years not by decades but by centuries. at long last their strength gave way, and they sank to the earth from which they originally came. After more than nine hundred years Adam died, and passed away from the world that had witnessed both his fall and his repentance. And so, "by one man sin entered into this world, and by sin death" (Rom. v, 12).

And the worst of it all, and what concerns us most, is

this, that all this change in the condition and circumstances of our First Parents was not confined to themselves, but passed on to their descendants. Whatever Adam possessed over and above what was requisite for the natural perfection of humanity he lost at the Fall, and not that alone, but his sin inflicted a wound upon nature, and it is nature so wounded that he transmitted to his descendants. For as, if he had not fallen, he would have handed on our nature to his descendants as it was in himself—that is, endowed above its due—so, when he fell, he handed it down, just what he had brought it to—wounded and injured. Hence the clouded mind, the weak and irresolute will, the disinclination to virtue, the power and seduction of passion, and of course the absence of grace. Adam and Eve stood at the head of the race. Humanity was identified with them; they were humanity in fact, and such as it was in them they of necessity handed it on to their descendants. Grace, it is true, is given to us again in Baptism, but grace leaves nature as it finds it, weakened and fallen. Indeed, the first more than natural perfection of our First Parents was not the effect of grace, though with the loss of that perfection came the struggle with passion and temptation, to persevere in grace and in the favour and friendship of God. Yet we need not be discouraged, for we are not delivered over to the seduction of temptation without help, nor to the wiles of the tempter who proved more than a match for our First Parents. "God", as St. Paul explains," is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above what you are able: but will make also with temptation issue that you may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. x, 13). Then, what

with the help of grace, which Our Blessed Saviour has placed so easily within our reach, and the assistance of His blessed Angels, whom God has appointed to take charge of us, and so many helps besides, one needs but an earnest will to live a life of virtue and merit. Given only good will, and the means of sanctification are ready to every hand. "God is rich unto all that call upon Him" (Rom. x, 12). And every age, and every condition of life, especially since the coming of our Saviour, is rich in examples of men and women who attained great eminence in virtue and holiness of life.

On the other hand, if we have lost much by the Fall, we have gained much by it also; for to it is due the Incarnation of the Son of God, and the distinction as well as the blessings which have come to the human race from that mystery. And the heroic sanctity of the Saints, and the great, if hidden and unsuspected, sanctity of so many of the ordinary faithful, made possible by the manifold graces of Redemption, tell of a higher order of goodness and virtue than was possible without the Fall. If God permitted that evil, then He has turned it to good account; and the Church does not hesitate to acclaim it as a happy fault that merited such, and so great a Redemption.

CHAPTER VI.

The Angels.

We saw in the last chapter that the fall of our First Parents is to be traced to the suggestion and persuasion of the devil as its original source. Who is the devil, and how is this malicious suggestion explained? The devil is one of the Angels who rebelled against God, and who, in punishment of their rebellion, were cast out of heaven. This fall of the Angels is far more unaccountable and inexcusable than that of our First Parents, bad and inexcusable as their fall was. The Angels are the highest of God's creatures. They resemble Him most of all, and show forth in the splendour of their nature and the magnificence of their powers the surpassing excellence of the Divinity. They are pure spirits like God, "Who makest Thy Angels spirits" (Psalm ciii), and are subject to none of the infirmities that a mixed nature like ours is heir to. Their intelligence is incomparably beyond ours, and they see by simple intuition what we come to understand only by a slow and laborious process of reasoning. They know with definite certainty, seeing in the strong clear light of their minds distinctly, whatever they see, and they see what is far above our reach. In the clearness and range of their vision they come nearest to God, while falling infinitely below Him in this, as in all other respects. For however great their powers, they are but creatures and finite; while God is the Creator of all things, and the Infinite.

The Angels are divided into nine choirs or classes, each

surpassing the other in the brilliancy and splendour of their gifts. And as obtains among ourselves, but more so, each individual Angel of the various choirs differs from the others in his own special graces and perfections. One can imagine the splendour of this angelic world made up as it is of creatures who are wholly spiritual, and whose faculties and powers are in keeping with a nature that is not dimmed by age, nor depends on outside aid for its continued existence—of creatures who in number and variety surpass the stars of heaven, and in their glorious throngs reflect so well the transcendent glory of the Creator.

At their creation the Angels were made happy, as our First Parents were happy, only incomparably more so. And they were all created at once ; hence there is no dependence among them by reason of descent, as amongst us, nor could there be, as they are pure spirits. Nor is there any relation among them other than what comes of identity of nature and community of purpose. They were created in grace, and destined to the glory of heaven, and to act as fitting ministers of God's wishes around His throne. They were not admitted to the beatific vision at once, otherwise none of them could have fallen. They had their day of trial like our First Parents, and despite the wonderful knowledge that was theirs, and the corresponding graces given them to secure their fidelity, in an evil hour many of them wavered and fell.

It matters little what was the occasion of their fall. The following passage from Isaias would indicate that, rejoicing in the strength of their mighty natures, and their all but boundless powers, they came to vie with God

Himself, and were struck down instantly by Him for their temerity. "How art thou fallen from heaven Lucifer . . . . and thou saidest in thy heart: I will ascend into heaven. I will exalt my throne among the stars of God. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High" (Isaias xiv, 13, 14). Refusal to acknowledge and pay homage to the Incarnate Word, when His future Incarnation was revealed to them, is assigned by many as the reason of their fall. It implied a similar spirit of haughtiness. For surely God, in the humility of His Incarnation, is rather more than less worthy, of the homage of any mere creature, no matter how endowed, and who owes all that he is and has to God's munificence. Having made the fatal choice, anyhow, there was no repenting, and the swift, avenging justice of the offended Creator revealed the ruin that had befallen so many of His most favoured creatures. "I saw Satan like lightning, falling from heaven" says Our Lord (Luke x, 18). And St. Peter tells us how "God spared not the Angels that sinned, but delivered them unto torments" (2 Pet. ii, 4).

Confirmed in evil, and condemned without hope, with their natural faculties still surviving amidst the ruins of their greatness, their only ambition is to deprive God of the honour His creature would pay Him, when they cannot more nearly injure Him. Seeing our First Parents so favoured and so happy, and destined moreover to fill the places intended for themselves, in the hope of frustrating God's designs over them, and of compassing their ruin, the devil approached Eve, and with specious and seductive arguments tempted her. Only too well did he succeed. And this fall of

our First Parents, which loosed the restraints put upon our passions at the creation, together with the untiring malignity of the evil one, "Who goes about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet. v, 8), has brought many a child of Adam, and will continue to the end to bring many more, to share, in the abode of despair, the torments of that "everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. xxv, 41).

As man's first ruin is due to the temptation of the devil, much of the sin and misery of the world since, if not all of it, is due to his malign influence, aided by the passions of men. Blinded by these passions, and their worldly ambitions, people lend themselves readily to his mischievous purposes, and become the willing, if unconscious, instruments of his wicked designs. The avarice of Judas, e.g., which led him to betray his Master was quickly availed of by Satan, to effect that man's ruin, while it was the means at the same time of bringing about our Saviour's death. "And Satan entered into Judas . . . . and he discoursed with the chief priests and magistrates how he might betray Him to them" (Luke xxii, 3, 4). Uncertain of His identity after His forty days fast in the desert, Satan approached Our Saviour Himself, and tempted Him, now with one and now with another suggestion, until Our Lord, indignant at the proposal to worship him in exchange for all the kingdoms of the earth and the glory of them, banished him from His presence saying: "Begone Satan, for it is written the Lord thy God shalt thou adore, Him only shalt thou serve" (Matt. iv, 10). To the temptation of the devil St. Peter attributed the sin of Ananias, for he

said: "Why hath Satan tempted thy heart that thou shouldest lie to the Holy Ghost" (Acts v, 3).

When our First Parents yielded to his wicked suggestion, the devil acquired a certain power over us, "For by whom a man is overcome, of the same also he is the slave," (2 Pet. ii, 19); and St. Paul says: "Know you not that to whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants you are whom you obey" (Rom. vi, 16). And the whole course of Bible History, as well as the deceptions practised on pagan peoples, show to what fatal effect Satan has used his power. One of the most terrible instances of this is his taking possession of a person. Many instances of diabolic possession are related in the New Testament, and the cruelties which he inflicted on his victims were terrible. "For many times it seized him, and he was bound with chains, and kept in fetters, and breaking his bonds he was driven by the devil into the deserts, and Jesus asked him saying: what is thy name? But he said: Legion; because many devils were entered into him" (Luke viii, 29, 30). Our Lord frequently expelled the devil from the possessed. He gave the power of expelling him to His disciples also: "Calling together the Twelve Apostles He gave them power and authority over all devils" (Luke ix, 1). "Lord, the devils also are subject to us in Thy name" (Luke x, 17). And He gave the same power to the Church. He redeemed us indeed from the power of Satan by His Passion and Death, and since our Saviour's day his power to vex and harass us, if not overthrown, is greatly restricted. Rarely indeed, if ever, is he allowed to take possession of any person now, yet the exorcisms of the Church,

i.e., prayers said by her ministers over the possessed, testify to such occurrences. The most he is permitted to do, ordinarily, is to tempt by suggestions and such inducements as he can use to bring people to sin. But by prayer, and the invocation of the Holy Name of Jesus who overcame him ; by the use of Holy Water, the Sign of the Cross, and any of the many other pious helps we have in the Church—we can always defeat his worst and most persistent assaults.

But all the Angels did not fall ; on the contrary by far the greater number remained faithful. These were instantly confirmed in their fidelity, and raised to the happiness of the beatific vision. Ranging themselves on the side of their Creator, they were made the instruments of His power, and the ministers of His justice, and under the leadership of St. Michael they made heaven empty of their presence, of which they had been found unworthy. "And there was a great battle in heaven. Michael and his angels fought with the dragon, and the dragon fought with his angels, and they prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven" (Apoc. xii, 7, 8). As God's faithful ministers as well as the most gifted of His creatures, their will is one with the will of God in all things, and they desire with the whole strength of their being the realization of His will over all creation. And as in His scheme of nature the higher things act on what is below them, to bring them to their special and appropriate functions and ends ; as the sun and heavenly bodies act upon the earth, e.g., and on all forms of life, helping them thus to the end and purpose of their existence ; the Angels, as the highest rational creatures,

act upon us for our good, and this all the more as our destiny is the same as theirs: to reach, namely, the unending bliss and glory of Heaven. And this is arranged not as part of a general scheme only, but in detail and in particular, in as far as a special Angel is appointed to take charge of each individual person. Our Lord took care, in the course of His public life, to indicate the relations of the Angels with us. One of the reasons He gave for the caution and reserve to be observed with children was that their Angels are in God's presence, and are sure to lay before Him any injury done to them. "See that you despise not one of these little ones, for I say to you that their Angels in heaven always see the face of My Father who is in heaven" (Matt. xviii, 10). In the psalm where David speaks of God's care of the just man, he says: "For He hath given His Angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways" (Ps. xc, 11). The Angels, too, are supposed to preside over communities of people, over countries and cities, and congregations generally. And this is entirely in keeping with the order of Divine Providence that governs all creation. The most noticeable feature in all the world of God is order, and the foundation of order is superiority. Hence it is so reasonable to suppose that not amongst men alone nor amongst the Angels themselves, nor in the material world merely, but in the relations of all these various parts of creation with each other, these higher spirits preside over the functions and activities of the lower order of beings, as well in their corporate as in their individual condition. Hence do we read (Daniel x,13): "But the Prince of the kingdom of the Persians resisted

me one and twenty days, and behold Michael, one of the chief princes came to help me, and I remained there by the king of the Persians." Now the princes and kings here mentioned are not men but Angels, who were engaged in the interests of their several kingdoms. And we infer from this also that these presiding spirits take the side of the parties confided to their care, and in every reasonable way try to bring about the success of their efforts to attain their lawful ends.

In the course of Bible History we are made familiar with the mission of Angels, for all sorts of purposes, of public, and often of private interest. From Abraham to Moses, from the deliverance from the Egyptian captivity till the settling of the people in the Land of Promise, though the service of human leaders, as we know, was not dispensed with, Angels were employed also. Hence, the Destroying Angel, whose fatal visit to the first-born of the Egyptians broke down the reluctance that would continue the bondage of a race : and the pillar that lighted them in the night-time, and the cloud that shadowed them in the day, pointing out the course of the people's wanderings through the desert during forty years. Angels decided battles in favour of God's people, when superior numbers would have destroyed them, as in the time of the Assyrians (2 Chron. xx), and in the Fourth Book of Kings ; while the visits of Angels to holy men are too many to instance.

The Mystery of the Incarnation was announced to the Blessed Virgin by the Angel Gabriel. Angels came to announce the birth of Our Saviour to the shepherds.

An Angel was sent from heaven to comfort Our Saviour in His Agony in the Garden (Luke xxii, 43), and Angels were the heralds of His Resurrection to the pious women on Easter morning. An Angel delivered Peter out of prison (Acts xii), to the confusion and disappointment of Herod, and on occasions Angels directed the actions and movements of the other Apostles. And while we notice in this way this continuance of their services from the Old to the New Testament, they afford a sort of collateral evidence of the identity of the Divine ministration under both dispensations. The visits of Angels, if not so frequent in Christian times are by no means unknown. Some of the great saints had even frequent visits of Angels. St. Patrick, as is well known, had almost as companion St. Victor. And in his great struggle in prayer on Croagh Patrick for the perseverance and fidelity of the Irish people in the faith, an Angel-messenger came and went between heaven and himself, to bear and bring back his petitions and answers to them. St. Francis of Assisi, Founder of the Mendicant Friars, was favoured with angelic visits, and some saints who are not as well known in ecclesiastical history were similarly honoured.

What part our Guardian Angel plays—for to each of us is assigned a Guardian Angel, who is at our side from the cradle to the grave in silent and unobtrusive service—only the next world will reveal. Certain it is, anyway, that both by quiet inspiration, and many unnoticed acts, as well as by his active opposition to the attempts of the evil one, his benefits to us are beyond exaggeration.

In recognition of their services to her children, the

Church has instituted a festival in honour of these heaven-appointed Guardian Spirits, and on the 2nd October each recurring year she pays them the tribute of her thanks and praise, and multiplies her supplications to them in her Sacred Liturgy, to guard with ever-increasing watchfulness the precious trust confided to them. Michaelmas, a name that has come down from the ages of faith, shows what place St. Michael held in the veneration of the faithful and in the mind of the Church, in times that are now gone. The dedication of churches in his honour, in every country, keeps alive to our time this traditional devotion, and some famous shrines, as that of St. Michel on the coast of Normandy, so rich in votive offerings, attest the value in spiritual blessings and favours, of pious pilgrimages to sanctuaries sacred to his name. We cannot better end this chapter on the Angels than with the prayer of the Church on St. Michael's Day, which runs as follows: "O God, who has arranged in wonderful harmony the offices of Angels and men! Grant that our lives on earth may be always guarded by those blessed spirits who have the honour of ever assisting before Thy throne in heaven. Amen."

CHAPTER VII.

The Coming of the Redeemer.

In the Fall of our First Parents we saw already how the whole human race was involved. Original Sin was not their personal sin only ; it was their sin such as they were, the heads, viz., of the human race. Human nature, in fact, was identified with them. In them it was tainted at its source, and they handed it on to their descendants, not as they received it themselves, but such as they had made it. Without the special intervention of God, therefore, no child of Adam can come into this world endowed with gifts other than those that are proper to our nature, and certainly without His special intervention no one descended from Adam can be born in the state of sanctifying grace. In one instance, and in one only, did God so intervene ; that is in the case of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and she alone of the children of Adam was conceived without sin : " Our tainted nature's solitary boast." This doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, as it is called, was defined by Pope Pius IX, in the middle of the last century—in 1854, in the following words : " The doctrine which holds that the Blessed Virgin Mary in the first instant of her conception was, by the singular privilege of God, preserved free from all stain of Original Sin, is revealed by God, and therefore is always to be firmly believed by the faithful." This definition, while it teaches the exceptional privilege of the Blessed Virgin, confirms to us the doctrine of Original Sin.

We have noted already some of the consequences of this sin to our First Parents themselves, and to their descendants, but before all consequences came the fact that it was a grievous offence to God. Now, a grievous offence against God could not be suffered to remain without reparation or atonement. But who could repair it, or atone for it? A grievous offence to God has something of the infinite in it, because of the greatness of God who is offended. For so great an offence no one whose acts were of finite and limited value could make adequate atonement. Besides, our First Parents themselves, having fallen from grace, were in no condition to offer acceptable satisfaction. For the sinner and his sin are equally an abomination before God: "They became abominable as those things which they loved" (Osee ix, 10). Not, then, without some greater mercy than creation was it possible for our First Parents to recover God's friendship, and regain His grace. He might, indeed, leave them as they were, fallen and hopeless, and destined to punishment, as He left the Angels, but He had compassion upon them, and what they could not do for themselves, nor others do for them, He Himself undertook to do. He promised them a Redeemer, who would atone for their transgression, and in the faith of that promise He gave them repentance and pardon. "I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed; she shall crush thy head" (Gen. iii, 15).

But though the Redeemer was promised to our First Parents at once, He did not come in their lifetime, nor for ages afterwards. Meanwhile, with the progress of time and the spread of their descendants over the

world, the knowledge of God, and of man's duty to Him, languished in the minds of many. By a special providence, however, He took care that one people at least should remember Him; should know and serve Him. And to this people—the Jewish people—the descendants of Abraham, God often-times renewed the promise of the Saviour, in whom, He said, all the nations of the earth would be blessed: "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen. xxii, 18). Nor was His people all this time left destitute of spiritual and religious helps. The Old Testament with its histories recounting God's dealings in the earlier ages with their fathers, with its prophecies, teachings, and promises; and the Jewish religion itself, with its rites, observances, and sacrifices, all of which came directly from Almighty God—enabled the people to serve and worship Him. At last when the fullness of time was come, and the world—grown old in evil—was so much in need of the Saviour, God was pleased to send His Divine Son, who taking our nature in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary and being born of her, by His Sufferings and Death made atonement for the sins of men.

By her Immaculate Conception to which we have referred above, the Blessed Virgin was already being prepared for the office to which God had destined her, viz., that of the Mother of the Redeemer. In virtue of her Immaculate Conception she was free from Original Sin, and she lived no less free from actual sin also, during the course of her life. The teaching of the Church on this point (*Council of Trent*, Sess. vi) is expressed in the words of St. Thomas, who says: "It must

simply be confessed that the Blessed Virgin Mary never committed an actual sin, either mortal or venial, and so in her are verified the words of the Canticle: "Thou art all fair, and there is no spot in thee." (Cant. of Cant. iv, 7). Free from original sin, she was free from so many of the consequences that follow from it. Hence the proneness to sin and the facility of committing sin, which all others experience, were absent in her. And not that alone, but so endowed with grace and adorned with virtue was she from the first, that she was already, in her early years, not unworthy to become the Mother of God. "Her foundations are on the Holy Mountains" (Ps. lxxxvi). Hence, when the angel who was sent with the message that God had chosen her to be the Mother of the Redeemer came into her presence, he addressed her in words that are evidence of her wonderful excellence: "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee," said he. And this interview furnishes further proof of her great virtue. When introducing his message the Angel described what He would be who was to be born: "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of David His father, and He shall reign in the house of Jacob for ever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke, i, 32). The Blessed Virgin listened to this grand prophetic utterance in silence, and when the Angel had finished she simply pleaded her virginity, of which she had long before made a vow, to show that He could not be born of herself. But the Angel reassured her saying that this need be no bar to her acceptance of the office proffered to her, as (Luke i, 37) "God, to whom no word shall be impossible," could easily

reconcile her virginity with the divine maternity. Only then, when her cherished virtue was guaranteed to her, did she accept the dignity of becoming the Mother of the Saviour. Nor was her humility less remarkable than her purity. For far from being elated by a sense of her matchless exaltation, she could think of herself as but the servant or handmaid of God, and she expressed her feeling in this respect in words that bespoke her deep and unaffected humility. Accepting with bowed head the divine honour, she said "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to thy word" (Luke i, 38). And so with her consent the promise of ages was redeemed, and the world was blessed by the advent of the Saviour.

To guard the honour of her name, as well as to make suitable provision for her in life, the Blessed Virgin had, some time previous to this, been entrusted in marriage to St. Joseph, a man her senior in years, and whose virtue qualified him to act in the capacity of guardian to her. At the time of the Incarnation they lived at Nazareth, a town in the province of Galilee. "The Angel Gabriel was sent from God into a city of Galilee called Nazareth, to a Virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David, and the name of the Virgin was Mary" (Luke i, 26, 27). By means of the Blessed Virgin, then, God was pleased to send His Divine Son to redeem us; and so, if by the act of a woman we were cast down, by the co-operation of another woman —the Virgin Mary—we have been raised up again.

To assure her how God could reconcile her virginity with becoming the Mother of the Redeemer, the angel made known to the Blessed Virgin that her cousin St.

Elizabeth, though now advanced in years, was soon to give birth to her first-born. On hearing this the Blessed Virgin prepared to pay a visit to the future mother of the Baptist, for he was the child that was to be born of Elizabeth. Knowing, by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, what wonders God had wrought in the Blessed Virgin Mary, as she approached to her house Elizabeth rose up to meet her, and saluted her with that inspired eulogy which has been carefully treasured in the Church, and is embodied in our daily prayers: "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb" (Luke i, 42). At that interview the Baptist was sanctified in his mother's womb, and the Blessed Virgin, in answer to the salutation of her cousin, gave utterance to the beautiful Canticle the *Magnificat*, in which she bears grateful testimony to the wonders God had wrought in her, and foretells the place she is destined to hold in the veneration of coming ages: "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God, my Saviour . . . and behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed" (Luke i, 46). On the 25th of March the mystery of the Incarnation took place, in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary, by the power and operation of the Holy Ghost. On the 25th of December following, the Son of God was born of her, and so the promise of sending the Redeemer was fulfilled.

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CHAPTER VIII.

The Birth and Private Life of Our Blessed Saviour.

On the 25th of December our Saviour was born in a stable at Bethlehem, far from His parents' home. That He was born in Bethlehem was indeed in accordance with the prophecy which said: "Thou Bethlehem, land of Juda . . . . . from thee will come forth the captain that shall rule My people Israel" (Mic. v, 2; Matt. ii, 6), but that His birth did take place there, was brought about in a remarkable way.

Shortly before He was born a decree went out from Rome ordering a census of the people throughout the Empire. The returns were to show, not where the people happened to reside at the time, but the place to which the families belonged. Now Joseph and Mary lived then at Nazareth, but they belonged to Bethlehem in Judea. To fulfil the conditions of the census, they had to come down from Nazareth to Bethlehem at the time the Redeemer was about to be born. And here we have to notice how wonderfully the designs of God are brought about, and what means He makes use of at times to serve His own high purposes. When the Roman Emperor ordered the census to be made he had little thought of anything beyond numbering his subjects. But the census served the much higher purpose of bringing about the verification of the prophecy which defined the place of the birth of the Redeemer. And it served also to fix the date in history of the most remarkable event that ever took place. When Joseph and Mary arrived in Bethlehem they sought about for

suitable lodgings, but failed to find any. Leaving the town towards evening, they were glad to avail of the friendly shelter of a stable; and there in the absence of comfort, in the dead of the night, the Saviour of the world was born. But whilst Bethlehem was unconscious of the visitors at her gates, and of what distinction had come to her that night because of Him who had made it His birth-place, heaven was not so. Angels came down and filled the place with their songs, as they paid homage to the new-born Saviour. Shepherds who were watching their flocks in the neighbourhood saw and heard them, and were summoned by them to come and worship Him. "And there were in the same country shepherds watching, and keeping the night watches over their flock. And behold an Angel of the Lord stood by them, and the brightness of God shone round about them, and they feared with a great fear, and the Angel said to them: fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy that shall be to all the people. For this day is born to you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David" (Luke ii, 8, 9). "And suddenly there was with the Angel a multitude of the heavenly army, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will" (Luke ii, 14). How heaven bears witness to our Saviour's coming! An Angel from heaven comes to treat with the Blessed Virgin when He was about to become man. When He is born into the world, Angels come again to pay Him homage. And after they pay Him homage they become His heralds to the people, whom they summon to His presence to worship Him with themselves.

Nothing could have been more disconcerting to our calculations than the manner of the coming of Our Blessed Saviour. Indeed, the Jews, who were expecting Him at the time, were sadly disappointed in Him. And humanly speaking, the manner of His coming and the humble condition of His life afterwards were a hindrance to their recognizing Him as the hoped-for Messiah. But He came "to save that which was lost." He came to wean the people away from the pride and folly of earthly ambitions, which had been the ruin of human happiness. Hence He came not with the signs of worldly magnificence, but in the absence of all such things. He came in humility, and in want of every social advantage. He was born of humble parents. He lived a retired life. He submitted to the restraints of a humble home. He lived as an artisan, and worked for His bread. He submitted to the simple usages of the humble people of His native place. He conformed to all their observances, social and religious, as if He were only an ordinary person, no better than others, while He was all the time the very Son of God! On the other hand, is not this utter absence of all worldly aids to the success of His mission and work to be reckoned as evidence of the Divine power in Him who without such helps could accomplish the wonders that then and since are to be placed to His credit?

He was circumcised on the eighth day, as the Law required, and "He received the name Jesus which was called by the Angel before He was conceived in the womb" (Luke ii, 21). "And after the days of her purification according to the Law of Moses were accomplished, they carried Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the

Lord . . . And behold there was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon, and this man was just and devout, and the Holy Ghost was in Him. And he had received an answer from the Holy Ghost, that He should not see death before he had seen the Christ of the Lord. And when His parents brought in the Child Jesus, he also took Him into his arms, and blessed God and said: "Now Thou dost dismiss Thy servant, O Lord, according to Thy word in peace, because my eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples, a light to the revelation of the Gentiles and the glory of Thy people Israel" (Luke ii, 21-32). What circumstances, what language, from an old priest, whose eyes were kept open till they fell upon that Child of Promise whose coming would be a light to the Gentiles and the glory of Israel.

Another circumstance that marked the birth of the Redeemer was the coming of the Wise Men from the East, led by a mysterious star—the star so long ago foretold: "A star shall arise out of Jacob" (Num. xxiv, 17). Guided by this star, these men came to Jerusalem inquiring where the King of the Jews was born, for, said they: "We have seen His star in the East and are come to adore Him" (Matt. ii, 2). "The King hearing this was troubled and all Jerusalem with him, and assembling all the chief priests and the scribes, he inquired where Christ should be born. But they said to him in Bethlehem of Juda, for so it is written by the prophet. Then Herod privately calling the Wise Men sent them into Bethlehem saying: Go and diligently inquire after the Child, and when you have found Him bring me word, that I also may come and adore

Him. Who having heard the King went their way, and behold the star which they had seen in the East went before them until it came and stood over where the Child was. And entering into the house they found the Child with Mary His Mother and falling down they adored Him, and opening their treasures they offered Him gifts; gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having received an answer in sleep that they should not return to Herod, they went back another way into their country. And after they were departed, behold an Angel of the Lord appeared in sleep to Joseph, saying: Arise, and take the Child and His Mother, and fly into Egypt: and be there until I shall tell thee. For it shall come to pass that Herod will seek the Child to destroy Him. Who arose, and took the Child, and His Mother, by night, and retired into Egypt: and He was there until the death of Herod. That it might be fulfilled which the Lord spoke by the prophet: Out of Egypt have I called My Son. Then Herod perceiving that he was deluded by the Wise Men killed all the men children that were in Bethlehem and in all the borders thereof, from two years old and under" (Matt. ii, 3-16). This massacre of the Innocents carried out at the command of Herod marks in blood the impotence of a tyrant who would destroy in His Infancy the New-Born King, while it is another record of the Birth of the Saviour and of the effect it produced on the mind of the reigning sovereign of the place.

"But when Herod was dead behold an Angel of the Lord appeared in sleep to Joseph in Egypt, saying: Arise and take the Child and His Mother and go into the land of Israel, for they are dead that sought the life of

the Child . . . and coming he dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was said by the prophet, that He shall be called a Nazarite" (Matt. ii, 19, 23).

All these circumstances surrounding the Infancy and early years of Jesus—in which revelation and prophecy are repeated and verified, in which angels figure as frequently as men, where a mysterious star brings wise men from afar, where shepherds and kings offer worship and gifts, where heaven and earth seem to recognize their Master—are evidence of the presence of the long-foretold and the long-expected Messiah in this Child of Mary. In the history of the world this Infancy and Childhood of Christ stand out without example. Other men become great in their after years; Christ, too, was great, incomparably great, in His Manhood, great in His teaching, His institutions, His miracles; but only He in His Infancy and His Birth has heaven and earth, men and angels, honouring and ministering to Him. And this is so, as the Angel said to the shepherds, because in Him "is born to us the Saviour who is Christ the Lord" (Luke ii, 11). Out of their sacred books the learned of the time identify His birth-place, and quote the prophecy which assigned the honour to Bethlehem. And though His parents lived at Nazareth far away in the North, and resided there almost to the eve of His birth, and though no supernatural agency intervenes, a civil proclamation issued for another purpose brings about the verification of the prophecy and secures undying distinction to Bethlehem.

From the return out of Egypt till He began to appear in public our Saviour's life was entirely uneventful.

He withdrew altogether from public notice, nor did He allow anything in His outward manner among the people, as He grew up and mixed among them, to manifest His identity to them. He lived, too, at Nazareth, away from the scenes of His birth and early childhood. Had He lived near Bethlehem, where the Innocents were put to death, and the accounts of the wonders of His birth had gone abroad among the people, they would have remembered these things still, and would have expected remarkable developments in His career as the years passed by. He left all these things to be recorded afterwards by others. He made no use of them Himself in His lifetime. He rather avoided notice, and hid Himself away from the attention of the public, content to live in the obscurity of an artisan's life in a humble home among the humble people of a country town—a living example of how men should live. One fact alone is recorded in a thirty-years life, and it casts its own light on the principles that guided His conduct, and the motives that influenced His actions. It is narrated in the Gospel in the following words: "And His parents went every year to Jerusalem at the solemn day of the Pasch. And when He was twelve years old, they going up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast, and having fulfilled the days, when they returned, the Child Jesus remained in Jerusalem . . . And not finding Him, they returned into Jerusalem, seeking Him. And it came to pass that after three days they found Him in the Temple sitting in the midst of the doctors, hearing them and asking them questions. And all that heard Him were astonished at His wisdom

and His answers. And His Mother said to Him: Son why hast thou done so to us, behold Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing. And He said to them: How is it that you sought Me, did you not know that I must be about My Father's business? . . . and He went down with them and came to Nazareth and was subject to them" (Luke ii, 41, 51).

These years of the hidden life of Our Blessed Lord teach a great lesson. They were spent under the same roof with His parents, nor did He aim at anything higher than, in simple submission and subjection to them, to assist them in the occupations proper to their station. But when we reflect on it, could anything be more appropriate for one whose special purpose was to teach men how to live than to give the pattern in His own life, how the lives of all, and especially of the young, should be moulded. The few words: "He went down to Nazareth and was subject to them", give the history of His life for thirty years. He was subject as a boy and as a man to the rule of His parents. That is His lesson to the world—the lesson of domestic subjection of the young to the old. And as is seen in the solitary instance quoted out of a thirty years life, He was equally observant of and subject to the laws and observances of religion: "His parents went every year to Jerusalem at the solemn day of the Pasch."

When He had come to the fullness of manhood, and therefore humanly speaking could command respect as a teacher, He brought His private life to a close, quitted Nazareth, and commenced His public ministry.

CHAPTER IX.

The Public Life of Our Blessed Saviour.

The opening of the public life of Our Lord was marked by incidents not unlike those that attended His birth and early childhood. When He was about to commence it St. John the Baptist was drawing numbers in the neighbourhood of the Jordan to listen to his exhortations to the people, to do penance for their sins. In this way the Baptist was preparing them for the greater Preacher than himself, who was to come after him, "the latchet of whose shoes", he declared, "he was not worthy to loose" (John i, 27), "and to make whom manifest to Israel he was come baptizing" (John i, 31). From town and country all classes flocked to hear the Baptist, and were baptized by him. "Jesus", the Gospel tells us, "came from Galilee unto John to be baptized by him" also. But John, recognizing Him, protested and said: "I ought to be baptized by Thee; and comest Thou to me?" But Jesus answering said to him: "Suffer it to be so now, for so it becometh us to fulfil all justice," and, "Jesus being baptized . . . lo! the heavens were opened and he [John] saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and coming upon Him. And behold a voice from heaven saying: This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. iii, 13, 17). So approved and accredited did our Lord come before the world to deliver the message of salvation.

Soon after, "Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert,

to be tempted by the devil; and when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterwards He was hungry. And the tempter coming said to Him: If Thou be the Son of God command that these stones be made bread. Who answered and said: It is written, not in bread alone doth man live, but in every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God" (Matt. iv, 1–4).

Three such suggestions, one after another, the tempter made to Our Saviour, each of which He at once rejected; and the Scriptures tell us: "then the devil left Him and behold angels came and ministered to Him" (Matt. iv, 11). And after a little while we are told: "From that time Jesus began to preach," and taking up where the Baptist ended, He said: "Do penance, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. iv, 17); and this, as St. Luke tells us, just as "He was beginning about the age of thirty years" (Luke iii, 23). Not, then, until He had come into the fullness of manhood, and what is more instructive, not before He had received the sanction of His Eternal Father, who proclaimed Him in the hearing of the people His beloved Son; not, too, before he had prayed and fasted for forty days, to call down the blessing of heaven on His ministry, and had been tried by temptation—did Our Saviour enter upon His Public Life, teaching men the truths that lead them back to God and make Him known to them.

He appeared before the public as a religious teacher, and His aim was rather to inculcate the practice of virtue than merely to instruct the people in doctrine. He did not come to surprise them with His learning as a philosopher, nor with His wisdom as a sage, nor was

there in His mode of life what was above the imitation of the virtuous. He did not come as a social reformer, nor did he condescend to concern Himself with the social or political conditions of His time. He came to improve, not the condition of the people, but the people themselves. His words were for all times and for every place; for all peoples under all circumstances, and He exhorted them to seek the kingdom of God and His justice, for all else men desired would follow upon these. "Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things will be added unto you" (Matt. vi, 33).

He taught by His example as well as by His words, and when we read His life in the Gospel, we have a transcript of His teaching before us. He dispensed with all outside advantages, whether of station or influence, for the success of His mission, and He lived and moved mostly among the poor. His first thoughts were for them and He consoled and encouraged them, not indeed with the prospect of an improvement in their condition as a result of His teaching, but with the promise of heaven if they had the spirit of poverty in their hearts: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. v, 3). He spoke discouragingly of riches, of which He would have none Himself, and enlarged on the dangers attendant on them, and declared that only with difficulty could a rich man enter the kingdon of heaven. "How hardly shall they that have riches enter the kingdom of God" (Luke xviii, 24). In the expression: "Blessed are the poor in spirit," we have the key to His teaching, the characteristic note of which is to ignore appearance and

outward show. Whether He gave praise or blame, whether He approved or condemned, externals counted for little ; He looked to the disposition of the heart—to the heart that is the source of all evil, and equally of all good. And because it is vain to seek for virtue or to hope to remove the evils that beset either individuals or society as long as the heart of man is not cleansed, He sought to turn men's thoughts in upon themselves, to rectify the dispositions and inclinations of the heart. "For from the heart cometh forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false testimonies, blasphemies" (Matt. xv, 19).

He exhorted the people to love one another in an all-embracing charity that knew no distinctions of friend or foe, race or creed. "For if you love them that love you what reward will you have? do not even the publicans this? And if you salute your brethren only, what do you more? do not also the heathens this?" (Matt. v, 46, 47). He inculcated the forgiveness of injuries as a condition for obtaining pardon for our own sins. "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us" ; and He went so far as to command us to love our enemies, and to do them service on the pattern of the Almighty, who knows no distinction in the distribution of temporal blessings between the good and the bad. "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, pray for them that persecute and calumniate you: that you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven, who maketh His sun to rise upon the good and the bad, and raineth on the just and the unjust" (Matt. v, 44, 45) ; and our services to others are to be measured by the strength

of our wish that they would do good to us. "All things, therefore, whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you also to them" (Matt. vii, 12).

These rules of conduct towards each other, so easy to understand and so comprehensive, and displaying such depth of insight, manifest the Divine Mind of the Master, and point out the source to which men must turn if they would find a remedy for the evils that afflict them, i.e., to their own hearts. And what is so grand and elevating in His teaching is what He would have men aim at in their virtuous endeavours. They were to be virtuous, not for virtue's sake or for any resulting temporal advantage such as the social reformer or philanthropist aims at, but for the honour of God and for the rewards of everlasting life. "So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Matt. v, 16). "Do good to them that hate you, . . . that you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven." Again He said: "Lay not up to yourselves treasures on earth, . . . but lay up to yourselves treasures in heaven" (Matt. vi, 19, 20). And on another occasion: "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth unto life everlasting" (John. vi, 27). To teach that by acts of virtue we can gain the rewards of everlasting life, and that the God of glory is honoured when we do good works for His sake, is to tell us what pearls of great price lie in our hands, if we but use aright the opportunities and experiences of our everyday life. "Whosoever shall give to drink to one of these little ones a cup of cold water . . . Amen, I say to you, he shall not lose his reward" (Matt. x, 42).

On the other hand so entirely is the exercise of our faculties to be dedicated to God's service, and be altogether blameless, that for every idle word that men shall speak they shall render an account of it on the day of judgment" (Matt. xii, 36).

By examples coming within the knowledge of everyone He taught some of the most consoling truths of religion—that while God is Master of the universe, He looks upon us with the feelings of a father. "That you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven, who maketh His sun to rise upon the good and the bad, and raineth upon the just and the unjust" (Matt. v). The sun in its course in the heavens is but carrying out God's law for our benefit; and the refreshing rain that renews the earth and causes the vegetation to spring, upon which animal life depends, falls in obedience to His will—yet the great God who thus rules the universe is our Father! His providence is over the birds of the air, and the colour of the lily is the work of His hands. The hairs of our head He has numbered, and no one of them falls without His permission. "Behold the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor do they reap . . . and your heavenly Father feedeth them." "Consider the lilies of the field how they grow . . . But I say to you that not even Solomon is all his glory was arrayed as one of these. And if the grass of the field . . . God doth so clothe, how much more you" (Matt. vi, 26–30). He would have us to turn to God with the confidence of children, praying to Him in all our needs, even though: "Your Father knoweth what is needful for you before you ask Him" (Matt. vi, 8).

Though God is offended by sin He would encourage us to seek pardon by enlarging on His mercy rather than insisting on the requirements of His justice. "And though the outer darkness" (Matt. viii), "and the everlasting fire in which final impenitence is expiated to no purpose for the sinner (Matt. xxv), show how dreadful are God's punishments, His association with sinners in His lifetime (Matt. ix), and His unwearied patience with them (Matt. xii), His picture of the humble publican (Luke xviii), and of the returning prodigal (Luke xv), and His pardon and defence of the penitent Magdalen—show the spirit of Him who "came to call not the just but sinners to repentance" (Matt. ix). "And the people were in admiration of His doctrine, for He was teaching them as one having power" (Matt. vii and xxii). He spoke of things to come as one who saw what he spoke about: "Amen, I say to you there shall not be left here a stone upon a stone that shall not be destroyed" (Matt. xxiv), and time has been verifying His predictions since He uttered them. He amended the Law of Moses in various particulars (Matt. v), and set it aside altogether in others (Matt. xix); and He made the future salvation of men depend on conditions He Himself laid down: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be condemned" (Mark. xvi, 16).

He lived altogether among the Jews. They, as the old-time people of God, had the privilege of hearing "the word of life" from the lips of the Saviour. To confirm His doctrine, as well as to make Himself known to them, He wrought many miracles; and many

—influenced by His teaching and the grace that went with it, as well as at the sight of His miracles and the manner of His life—believed that He was the promised Redeemer. "We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ." "We have found Him of whom Moses, in the Law, and the Prophets did write, Jesus, the Son of Joseph of Nazareth" (John i). But while many believed and became His followers, many others—and especially the Pharisees, a powerful sect in Judea at the time—did not believe. He exposed the hypocrisy of these men, who, under the appearance of virtue, were sinners at heart, and they in turn conceived a deadly hatred against Him. Joined by the priests, who were jealous at seeing so many abandon themselves to follow the new Teacher, they conspired to get rid of Him: "The chief priests therefore and Pharisees gathered together a council and said: What do we, for this man doth many miracles? If we let Him alone so all will believe in Him . . . From that day therefore they devised to put Him to death" (John xi,47,53). His death was due, then, to a conspiracy on the part of the wicked who could not bear His reproaches, and of the ambitious of public favour who had outlived their usefulness. They accused Him of no offence against the Law or the Government; nor could they, for He commanded obedience to, and respect for, authority: "Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's (Luke xx). Nor did they accuse Him of injuring another. His miracles, multiplied during His public life, would have silenced such a charge. And as to His teaching, He appealed to it Himself to justify Him when under trial. "I have spoken openly to the world. I have

always taught in the synagogues and in the Temple, whither all the Jews resort . . . ask them who have heard what I have spoken unto them, behold they know what I have said" (John xviii, 21). How grand this position our Saviour could take when on trial for His life!

Pontius Pilate, before whom He was tried, "knew that for envy they had delivered Him" (Matt. xxvii), and, pagan that he was, did what he could to set Him at liberty. After pleading in vain for Him, when only futile charges were preferred against Him, "taking water he washed his hands before the people, saying: I am innocent of the blood of this just man" (Matt. xxvii, 24).

Having failed to secure a conviction on such charges as they could bring against Him, His accusers changed their ground and demanded that He must be put to death because He had said He was the Son of God. "We have a law and according to the law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God" (John xix, 7). Pilate hearing this, and terrified at the possibility of its being true, only tried the more to set Him at liberty; the dignity and majesty of the accused impressed Him so much besides, and lent so much colour to the claim. But jealousy and prejudice blinded our Saviour's enemies, on whom all evidences of His divinity were lost, and having made up their minds to put Him to death, they were insensible to everything. They found an accomplice indeed in one of His disciples, Judas, who betrayed Him; but the remorse of this man afterwards, and his self-destruction failed to impress them. Nor was this the only incident

during His trial that might have made them pause. At the opening of His passion, when the crowd came to arrest Him, at the sound of His voice all fell helpless to the ground (John xviii). When facts such as these made no impression on His persecutors our Saviour allowed things to take their course, and to the end "He was like a lamb before his shearer, and He opened not His mouth" (Isaias liii, 7).

Thus, after the semblance of a trial in which the violence of His enemies prevailed over the weakness of His judge, He was handed over to be crucified. "Pilate, seeing that he prevailed nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, taking water washed his hands before the people, saying: I am innocent of the blood of this just man, look you to it. . . . then he delivered Him unto them to be crucified" (Matt. xxvii, 24–26). He was scourged and crowned with thorns, and though subjected to various indignities and gratuitous outrages, the inhumanity of His persecutors but touched His compassion, and in the extremity of His suffering He pleaded with His Father for mercy upon them: "Father, forgive them," said He, "for they know not what they do" (Luke xxiii,34). He was nailed to a cross, and after three hours of unspeakable agony He breathed out His soul into the hands of His Eternal Father, and so paid the supreme sacrifice of His life in satisfaction for the sins of men (Matt. xxvii).

His death was attended by extraordinary incidents, in which unconscious nature seemed to feel that something terrible was taking place. "And it was almost the sixth hour; and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. And the sun was darkened;

and the veil of the Temple was rent in the midst. And Jesus crying with a loud voice said: Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit. And saying this He gave up the ghost" (Luke xxiii, 46). "And behold the veil of the Temple was rent in two from the top even to the bottom, and the earth quaked, and the rocks were rent, and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints that had slept arose" (Matt. xxvii, 51). "And the centurion who stood over against Him, seeing that crying out in this manner He had given up the ghost, said: Indeed, this man was the Son of God" (Mark xv, 39). "And all the multitude of them that had come together to that sight, and saw the things that were done, returned striking their breasts" (Luke xxiii, 48). To dishonour Him the more "with Him they crucified two thieves; one on His right hand, and the other on His left"; in reality they were but unconsciously fulfilling, even in detail, the prophecy which saith: "and with the wicked He was reputed" (Isaias liii).

Our Saviour was taken down from the cross, and buried, on the day of His Crucifixion, as the law required (Exod). Besides, the Jews did not wish His body and those of the thieves to remain exposed on the great Sabbath day following. "They took, therefore, the body of Jesus, and buried it in linen cloths with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. Now there was in the place where He was crucified, a garden, and in the garden a new sepulchre in which no man yet had been laid. There, therefore, because of the parasceve of the Jews, they laid Jesus" (John xix, 41, 42). "And Joseph buying fine linen, and taking Him down, wrapped Him up in fine linen, and laid Him in

the sepulchre, which was hewed out of a rock, and he rolled a stone to the door of the sepulchre" (Mark xv).

But even then His enemies were not at ease. "The chief priests and the Pharisees came together to Pilate, saying: Sir, we have remembered that seducer said, while He was yet alive: After three days I will rise again. Command therefore the sepulchre to be guarded until the third day; lest perhaps His disciples come, and steal Him away, and say to the people: He is risen from the dead . . . And they departing, made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting guards" (Matt. xxvii, 62, 66). Our Blessed Saviour remained dead the day on which He was crucified, and the next, and on the next day again—Easter Sunday—early in the morning He arose to a new life glorious and immortal.

As we have now briefly outlined, we find the life of Jesus Christ altogether unexampled in the lives of men. He stands by Himself apart, incomparable in His character, in His doctrine, and in His deeds. His birth is miraculous, and according to prophecy: "Behold a virgin shall conceive and shall bring forth a son" (Isa.). Though He lives among men, and becomes a teacher and a leader of men, He has no human ambitions. When they would make Him King, He flies away from the people (John vi). He exercises power over nature in all its forms: "The winds and the sea obey Him" (Matt. viii). Disease and death fly at His word. In humiliation and suffering, as well as in the manifest display of superhuman power, He captivates men's minds, and they follow Him. "Indeed this man is the Son of God" (Mark xvi). He speaks of the future as one who sees it, and His words become true to the

letter (Matt. xxvi). He realizes in Himself what was foretold of the Saviour: " He hath sent Me to preach to the meek; to heal the contrite of heart " (Isaias lxi, 1) He calls Himself the Son of God and He gives proof of it—He dies on the cross as He predicted, and as was foretold of the Redeemer, and He arises from the dead on the third day, exactly as He had said beforehand: " Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man shall be betrayed to the chief priests and scribes, and they shall condemn Him to death, and shall deliver Him to the Gentiles to be mocked, and scourged, and crucified, and the third day He shall rise again " (Matt. xx, 18,19). When we see these predictions verified, and connect them with the many remarkable things which the Gospel records of Jesus; when we see, moreover, the Church which He founded enduring after Him and instead of showing weakness, but gaining strength with the years, and ever extending its boundaries, realizing in that way the prophecy of His kingdom, which shall not have an end—we have before us what the Christian world ever deemed sufficient to justify its belief in Christ as the Son of God and the Saviour of the human race.

CHAPTER X.

The Resurrection of Our Lord from the Dead.

"And the third day He shall rise again" (Matt. xx, 19). With that declaration our Lord ended His prophecy to the Apostles as to His resurrection. And just as His prediction in reference to His passion and death came true in every particular exactly as He stated, so also did that in reference to His resurrection. The facts are give by the Evangelist: "And in the end of the Sabbath when it began to dawn towards the first day of the week came Mary Magdalen and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. And behold there was a great earthquake. For an Angel of the Lord descended from Heaven, and coming, rolled back the stone, and sat upon it; and his countenance was as lightning, and his raiment as snow. And with fear of him the guards were struck with terror, and became as dead men. And the Angel answering said to the women: Fear not you, for I know that you seek Jesus that was crucified. He is not here, for He is risen, as He said. Come and see the place where the Lord was laid" (Matt. xxviii, 1–6). The other Gospel writers give the same account with more or less detail. St. Luke tells us how the Angel reminded the women of the prophecy made by Our Lord, that He would be crucified and would rise again the third day. (Luke xxiv, 5–8). But we are not depending on the word of the Angel for the truth of the resurrection of Our Saviour. We have the best of all evidence of it in the fact that

He appeared on several occasions, and that not to one or two persons but to groups of people, during the course of several weeks after His crucifixion and death. And what is more, He appeared to the very people who knew Him best, and who could best identify Him; and to them He appeared not in a flash or in a passing way, but for long periods together. And He was pleased to afford them an opportunity of testing the reality of His risen body, and its identity with that which suffered and was crucified; "He was made manifest," as St. Peter says, "not to all the people, but to witnesses pre-ordained by God, even to us, who did eat and drink with Him after He rose again from the dead" (Acts x, 40, 41).

He appeared first to Mary Magdalen, as she stood disconsolate beside the empty sepulchre, filled with anxious thought as to what had happened to the body that had unaccountably disappeared. St. John narrates the facts as follows: "But Mary stood at the sepulchre without, weeping . . . She turned herself back and saw Jesus standing, and she knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith to her: Woman, why weepest thou, whom seekest thou? She thinking that it was the gardener, saith to him: Sir, if thou hast taken Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away. Jesus saith to her: Mary. She turning saith to Him: Rabboni, which is to say, Master. Jesus saith to her: "Do not touch Me, but go to My brethren and say to them: I ascend to My Father and to your father; to My God and to your God" (John xx, 11-17). This was on Easter Sunday, the third day after He was crucified. Towards evening on the

same day, He appeared to two of His disciples who were on their way to Emmaus, a town a few miles distant from Jerusalem. To these He did not make Himself known at first either, but after travelling along with them and accompanying them whither they were going, He sat at table, and " while He was at table with them He took bread and blessed and brake and gave to them. And their eyes were opened and they knew Him: and He vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another: Were not our hearts burning within us whilst He spoke on the way, and opened to us the Scriptures? (Luke xxiv, 13–32).

That same evening, later still, He appeared to the disciples who were together in Jerusalem, and they being frightened, when He suddenly appeared in the midst of them, He said: " Why are you troubled and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? See My hands and feet that it is I Myself: handle and see: for a spirit hath no flesh and bones as you see Me to have. And when He said this He showed them His hands and feet " (Luke xxiv, 36-40). This apparition is described by St. John in almost the same words (Chap. xx), only that he was careful to note that the doors were closed when the Lord appeared in the midst of them. A week later He appeared again to them. " And after eight days again His disciples were within and Thomas with them; Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst and said: " Peace be to you." Then He said to Thomas: " Put in thy finger hither, and see My hands, and bring hither thy hand and put it into My side, and be not faithless, but believing. Thomas answered and said to Him: My Lord and my

God. Jesus said to Him: Because thou hast seen Me, Thomas, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen and have believed" (John xx, 26–29). The meaning of this special treatment of Thomas was this: being absent on Easter Sunday evening when Our Lord appeared to the rest of the disciples, and being told by them that the Lord had risen and appeared to them, he declared: " Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe." We might here remark what a perilous attitude was this taken by St. Thomas. It is true, of course, that his doubts and the conditions he laid down to justify his faith have brought out the evidence of Our Saviour's resurrection all the more clearly. But supposing that Our Lord was not pleased to satisfy these conditions, would that have taken away the fact and reality of His resurrection? Surely it is not for men to lay down conditions to Almighty God.

He appeared again afterwards to the disciples, on the shore of the Sea of Galilee one morning, after they had spent the night fishing in the lake. " When morning was come, Jesus stood on the shore, yet the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus said to them: Children, have you any meat? They answered Him: No. He said to them: Cast the net on the right side of the ship and you shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes. But the other disciples came in the ship dragging the net with fishes. As soon as they were come to land, they saw hot coals lying, and a fish laid thereon and bread. And Jesus said to them: Come

and dine. And none of them who were at meat durst ask Him: Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord. And Jesus cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish in like manner. This is now the third time that Jesus was manifested to His disciples after He was arisen from the dead" (John xxi, 1–14).

In his first epistle to the Corinthians, St. Paul writes: "For I delivered unto you first of all which I also received: How that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. And that He was seen by Cephas, and after that by the eleven; then He was seen by more than five hundred brethren at once, of whom many remain until this present, and some are fallen asleep. After that, He was seen by James, then by all the Apostles. And last of all He was seen also by me" (1 Cor. xv, 3–8). We might quite confidently leave the evidence of Our Lord's resurrection at that. No further corroboration is necessary. As far as competent witnesses can make anything certain, there is nothing wanting, to establish the fact of our Lord's resurrection. Well indeed might one believe in the divinity of Him who died on the cross, and was buried, and on the third day afterwards rose again to life—and all this exactly as He had foretold.

The miracle that of all others gained Him most followers in His lifetime was the resurrection of Lazarus (John xi). And surely He who could control the departed spirit of one dead already four days, and bring it up again from the untrodden regions of the world invisible and make it animate anew the

mouldering body in the grave, and banish from that body every trace of decay so that it came up again fresh and vigorous, might well be taken for Him who called that spirit into being at first and endowed it with immortality. And now when in turn He dies Himself, and on the third day afterwards His soul comes back to the body it parted from upon the cross and gives it a life such as human body never enjoyed before—giving it qualities such as we associate rather with a spirit than with a body—well might one say: here is surely the Lord of death and life, the living God, the Creator, and the Master of all things.

Considering facts like these, such facts as find no parallel in human experience besides—for no man but Our Lord ever rose from the dead—one can see the almost incredible waywardness of the human heart, and the all but unfathomable ways of the human mind, when men hesitate to recognize Christ for what He claimed to be, viz., the Son of God. And this is all the more striking when we remember on what evidence men accept other things as true. And when we go back upon His life and see Him realize in Himself what the Prophet foretold of the Saviour: "That He shall be filled with the spirit of the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge according to the sight of the eyes, nor reform according to the hearing of the ears, but he shall judge the poor with justice, and shall reprove with equity for the meek of the earth" (Isaias xi), in life and in death He comes before us with all His credentials upon Him, to conciliate for Himself the faith of all to whom His wonderful life shall have been preached. To give the best grounds possible for that faith, He

wished to place the fact of His resurrection beyond all question. Hence did He appear to His Apostles on so many occasions: did He appear not to one or another of them only, but to all of them together also; and He repeated these apparitions during several weeks. "To whom He showed Himself alive after His passion by many proofs for forty days" (Acts i, 3). He appeared to them by appointment in Galilee—that place so identified with His life, both private and public—the scene of His sermons and so many miracles; and He appeared to as many as five hundred people together (1 Cor. xv). Besides confirming the truth of the resurrection, He made these apparitions the occasion of other useful and necessary instructions to His Apostles. "Appearing to them, and speaking of the Kingdom of God" (Acts i, 3). These, as we shall see more fully later on, He made the depositories of His doctrine and His successors in His ministry. During His lifetime He had not found them too ready to understand His teaching; nor did they show that appreciation of Himself nor that insight into the meaning and purpose of His life, that was desirable and necessary. Going back now during these visits, and recalling many things which He had told them and that yet remained mysteries to them, He said: "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was yet with you, that all things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the Law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning Me. Then He opened their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures. And He said to them: Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead the third

day" (Luke xxiv, 44–46). The nature of the office, too, to which He had called them, He explained more fully on these occasions, and He invested them with power for the full discharge of their functions in it. He made everything ready, in short, during these days, for the inauguration of the new movement in which they were to be the chief actors, and which should make Him and His services known to the world and to all the children of Adam.

We need not dwell upon the question as to where Our Saviour's soul went during the interval between His death and resurrection. The faith of the Church is expressed in the words of the Creed which says: "He descended into hell"; not of course to the hell of the damned, but to that place in which the souls of the saints were detained until heaven should be opened for them by the death of the Redeemer. One of the penalties of original sin was the exclusion of our race, not from the earthly paradise of Eden only, but especially from heaven, as long as the requisite atonement for sin was not made. No matter what lives of virtue man may have lived during the long stretch of years from the Fall to the coming of the Saviour, none of them after death could enter heaven. The Patriarchs and Prophets, and all the rest, whose names were written in the Book of Life were kept in this place of detention. They were not in suffering, for they did not deserve to be, nor was it a place of suffering. It was a place of detention only; but not being the final resting place of the just who were there, they had one unceasing desire—that was, to see the day of their deliverance. These had the first claim on Our Saviour, and to them He went to announce in

person that the time of their deliverance was at hand. To this visit St. Paul alludes when he says—speaking of our Lord—"He descended to the lower parts of the earth" (Eph. iv, 9), and St. Peter when he says that "He preached to those spirits that were in prison" (1 Pet. iii, 19). Going to this Limbo of the Fathers, or Abraham's bosom as it was variously called, He changed the place from a prison into a sort of paradise; and hence when comforting the penitent thief on the cross He said to him: "This day thou shalt be with Me in paradise" (Luke xxiv). The blessed soul of Our Saviour remained with these holy spirits as long only as was necessary to put the reality of His death beyond question; and on the morning of the third day after He died He quitted it, joining His sacred Body in the Sepulchre, and so He raised it from the dead. And now, having fulfilled all justice between heaven and earth; having established the fact of His death, and the truth of the resurrection, the time was come to return to His Father.

The Ascension into Heaven.

Seated at table with His Apostles for the last time when it was now forty days since He arose from the dead, and having given them final instructions as to the future, He arose and led them out from Jerusalem in the direction of Bethany, a town not far from the city, and on to the Mount of Olives. Satisfied with all they had seen and heard from Himself as to the identity of their Divine Master, and what power belonged to

Him, but not even yet correctly realizing the purpose of His life and the nature of the work to which He had called them, the old thoughts came back to them again (if indeed they were ever entirely absent from their minds), about the future greatness of their nation, as a result of the coming of the Redeemer, and they asked Him: "Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom of Israel? But He said to them: It is not for you to know the times or moments which the Father hath put in His own power. But you shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you, and you shall be witnesses unto Me in Jerusalem, and all Judea, and Samaria, and even to the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts i, 6–8).

Having turned their thoughts in this direction He commanded them to attempt nothing until the Holy Ghost should have come to them. "And I send the promise of My Father upon you, but stay you in the city till you be endued with power from on high" (Luke xxiv, 49). Then when the Mount of Olives was reached —that place where He had struggled in prayer with the Father on the eve of His Passion, and was comforted and encouraged to accept it by the visit of an Angel— when all the needful instructions had been given to His Apostles, "lifting up His Hands, He blessed them, and it came to pass while He blessed them He departed from them, and was carried up to heaven. And while they were beholding Him going up to heaven, behold two men stood by them in white garments, who also said: Ye men of Galilee, why stand you looking up to heaven; this Jesus who is taken up from you into heaven shall so come as you have seen Him going into

heaven" (Luke xxiv). "And they adoring went back to Jerusalem with great joy" (Luke xxiv).

How beautiful these circumstances of the last days of our Redeemer's presence in the world! Consistent with Himself to the end, while the central figure in the most momentous events the world has ever known, there is no display but what is barely necessary for the least ostentatious publicity. Only a privileged circle of friends accompany Him to the place of His departure. And though He might have lifted then, in part, the veil that hid the future, and given a glimpse of the splendour of His kingdom—that would outlast all earthly kingdoms, and would stretch beyond the confines of them all—He is content to leave things where He placed them, in the prophetic utterances of His public ministry, and only counsels retirement and prayer to His Apostles, till the Holy Ghost comes. They on their part, though now deprived for good of His visible presence, impressed with a sense of His greatness and power which events of an order beyond earthly range had given them, when they saw Him rise from their midst, ascend through the air, and pass away to heaven, went back to Jerusalem not sad, "but with great joy" (Luke xxiv, 52).

CHAPTER XI.

The Call of the Apostles.

When we consider the purpose to which our Saviour devoted His life—viz., to teach the truths of religion to the world that had forgotten them, and by that means to bring people back to the knowledge and service of God—it is not to be supposed, considering who He was and what resources He had at His command, that He would allow His life-work to come to nought, once He had withdrawn from the scene of His labours and sacrifices. During His public life His actions pointed the other way, and from the early days of His preaching He proceeded to gather disciples around Him, as we have seen, and some of these He bound to Himself by special ties of companionship and intimacy. And though He confined His personal labours to the Jews: "I am not sent but to the sheep that are lost to the house of Israel" (Matt. xv), His purpose had a much wider scope. It embraced all the nations of the earth. And indeed, as is well known, the nations, as they were called, stood far more in need of His instructions and care than the Jews. These had the sacred books of Moses and the prophets. They had the traditional teaching of their priests. They had the priesthood with its worship and rites, its observances and festivals, for which they could justly claim a divine origin, and they had the Law and the Commandments which God gave to Moses for them. And though in our Saviour's day the voice of prophet had not been heard for centuries

amongst them, the words of the long line of prophets, from Moses onwards, were treasured up with care, and on the Sabbath days were read and explained to them by their priests and the doctors of the Law, in their places of worship: "and He went into the synagogue according to His custom on the Sabbath day" (Luke iv). "And He reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath day" (Acts xviii). It was far otherwise with the nations. The early traditions of the Fathers were lost in the wanderings and vicissitudes of these for want of a priesthood with requisite authority to teach and hand down to succeeding generations the truths of religion unadulterated. Too busy besides with other things they forgot at first the original teachings, and substituted afterwards in their stead their own crude imaginings and mistaken notions of religion and worship. In the time of Our Lord and for long before His day, and ever since wherever His sacred teaching is not known, the most mistaken notions prevailed and still prevail about God and man's relations with God. Now it was the purpose of Our Saviour's life to preach the truths of religion openly: "For this was I born and for this came I into the world that I should give testimony to the truth" (John xviii), so that the world, Jew and Gentile alike, would be instructed in them. For this purpose He chose certain ones from among His followers, whom He instructed with particular care, and when sufficiently prepared, He sent them out to preach, practising them in this way under His own eye.

There is nothing that stands out more distinctly in the public life of Our Lord than what we have just now

stated, viz., that He associated a certain limited number of men with Himself, and took special care to instruct and prepare them for the purpose of preaching and teaching His doctrine after Him. He called them to His following. He carried them with Him on His missionary journeys. They heard every discourse He preached, every exhortation He gave, every point of doctrine He announced, every parable He uttered. "And it came to pass afterwards that He travelled through the cities and towns, preaching and evangelizing the kingdom of God; and the twelve with Him" (Luke viii, 1). "All things whatsoever I have heard of My Father I have made known to you" (John xv, 15). And what was obscure and difficult to understand in His public utterances, He explained in private to them afterwards. "And when He was alone the twelve that were with Him asked Him the parable, and He said to them: "To you it is given to know the mystery of the Kingdom, but to the rest in parables" (Mark iv; Luke viii, 10). "Apart He explained all things to His disciples" (Mark iv, 34). And the selection of these companions He seemed to regard as among the most important acts of His life. He did not select them hastily, but rather after trial and deliberation and prayer. And just as He prayed before entering upon His public life, and prayed before entering on His Passion, so He prayed before selecting these men to be His Apostles. "And it came to pass in those days that He went out into a mountain to pray, and He passed the whole night in the prayer of God, and when the day was come, He called unto Him His disciples, and He chose twelve of them (whom also He named Apostles):

Simon, whom He surnamed Peter, and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew, Matthew and Thomas, James the son of Alpheus, and Simon who is called Zelotes, and Jude the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot" (Luke vi, 12-16). "Then calling together the twelve Apostles He gave power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases, and He sent them to preach the Kingdom of God . . . and going out they went about through the towns preaching the Gospel" (Luke ix, 1–6).

Nor indeed was this a new departure introduced by Our Lord when He would have the word of God preached. It was the invariable way with God when He would make known His wishes to the people, at all times. He called Moses and instructed him and commissioned him to go in His name: "Go therefore and I will teach thee what thou shalt speak" (Exod. iv). He called the prophets and sent them, and the usual formula employed by them to authenticate their mission was: "Thus saith the Lord," or some similar expression. And so usual was the practice, and so well was it understood that no one could undertake to teach the word of God to others without a special call from God for the purpose, that St. Paul in his Epistle to the Romans asks: "How shall they preach unless they be sent" (Rom. x). And indeed how could it be otherwise? If the word or the mind of another is to be authentically and authoritatively declared, a commission to declare it must be given by him whose word it is. This principle which holds in all important communications between men is much more necessary in the case of divine truth, which can be known only by the revelation of God. If

God would authenticate His word to us, therefore, He must appoint His teachers, and commission them to declare it to us. What they disclose then is not their own, but the word of God. Hence, as He in the earlier ages made use of Moses to make known His will to the Jewish people, and before him made use of the Patriarchs; and in later times spoke to the Fathers by the Prophets, and after these by His Divine Son—so He in His turn, when He would send down His message to coming ages, spoke to them by the Apostles whom He chose for the purpose. And He indicated this His intention to them when He sent them already in His day preaching through the towns and villages. He made His purpose clearer still when He instructed them how they were to act in the future years, when they should "preach from the house-tops what they now heard in the ear" (Matt. x). Later on He said to them: "I have chosen you, and have appointed you, that you should go and bring forth fruit, and your fruit shall remain" (John xv, 16). And again He said: "As My Father sent Me, I also send you" (John xx, 21). And in St. Mark He said expressly: "Go ye into the whole world and preach the Gospel to every creature" (Mark xvi, 15); and again: "Going therefore teach ye all nations" (Matt. xxviii, 19.) It was far, then, from Our Saviour's mind when He went about preaching the truths of salvation among the Jews, "Preaching and evangelizing the kingdom of God" (Luke viii, 1), to leave it to circumstances whether His work should die with Himself or should survive and go on doing good after Him. He took special care that it should survive, and that His work, as the Prophet said, "shall prosper in the things for

which I sent it" (Isaias iv). He saw to it, that it should go on progressing from year to year; that the labours of His successors whom He had called to succeed Him should not be bounded during their lifetime like His own—by the confines of one nation, but that they should lift up their eyes to the nations outside, and regard the limits of the earth as the boundaries of their labours. "Going," said He, "teach ye all nations." "Go ye into the whole world and preach the Gospel to every creature" (Mark xvi).

There is something grand in that all-embracing purpose of Our Saviour. And it was a new thing in that sense to the world. The word of God, it is true, was never withheld from mankind. God freely and familiarly spoke to the first father of the human family. "They heard the voice of the Lord walking in Paradise at the afternoon air" (Gen.iii,8). But whatever manifestations of the divine mind were made in the beginning, in the course of time these became overlaid and confused, and finally were all but lost altogether among the generality of men. And if God spoke again, as He did repeatedly, and sent His messengers to give light and instruction to the people, it was but to one people. It was only when Our Saviour came, a man amongst men, and spoke the word of God in the language of men, with the voice of a man, regarding all men as His brothers, and overlooking the minor differences of nation and race, that He ordered His word to be carried abroad to the uttermost parts of the earth. "Go into the whole world and preach the Gospel to every creature"—to every human being. The grandeur of this conception—the idea of bringing together the

scattered tribes of the human family into one grand combination in the unity of the common possession of religious truth, and the power to give effect to this conception, is but another way of showing the divinity that lay concealed within the human form and figure of Our Saviour Jesus Christ. And really not long afterwards that project was realized in part, and it was true to say in the words of the prophet: "Their sound hath gone forth into all the earth, and their words into the ends of the whole world" (Ps. xviii, 5; Rom. x, 18). The difficulty of realizing a world-embracing project like this was beyond human effort. But race, and language, and distance, and ignorance, and prejudice, and the very sublimity of the Gospel teaching—all well-nigh insuperable barriers—counted for nothing in the mind of Our Saviour. Men must all know God as He is, and their relations with Him; and they must serve Him as they ought, and the Gospel which teaches the one and enables them to do the other, must teach them all. But consider the difficulties:—

The subjects embraced in the Gospel message are for the most part not within but without, or rather above, the range of human intelligence. Now Our Saviour, when He preached, did not unfold in detail the doctrines which He taught. Many things He did explain, indeed, to the Apostles, but very many things He did not explain. Now, how were very ordinary men as the Apostles were—how were any men dealing with subjects too deep or too high for them, to teach them to others as they were taught to themselves? how explain to themselves and to others, the difficulties that would arise to them at every step? And how

was a number of men such as Our Saviour selected, to continue to agree among themselves in their teaching? And as the Gospel was not to be the privilege of one age or people, but was to be preached to the end of time and the world over; and new men in each succeeding age, in increasing numbers, would have to be called in to help—how then was the identity of the teaching to be maintained everywhere, as it was originally delivered? And this must needs be if the Gospel is to be preached as it fell from the lips of its Author. And how was it to be applied in the ever-changing conditions of society. Now this is the wonder—this is the miracle Christ has accomplished. And the Gospel tells us by what means it has been brought about viz., by sending down the Holy Ghost.

CHAPTER XII.

The Promise of the Holy Ghost.

During His own day when our Lord sent out His Apostles to preach, we do not read that He provided any better security for the success of their work than was implied in His own presence. As long as He was at hand He could easily overtake any mistakes they might possibly make. But when He would have withdrawn to heaven and was no longer accessible, without one equally capable and equally available,

the Gospel in the hands of the Apostles, and much more so in the hands of their successors, would be a failure, and its teaching after a time would be as little known as the first revelation made to men. But the same source from which the prophets in times past drew their knowledge and inspiration—He who under the appearance of a dove openly descended upon Our Lord Himself (John ii) when He was about to begin His public mission—the same (viz., the Holy Ghost), Our Saviour promised and the same He sent, to make up for the shortcomings of His appointed teachers, and make them what St. Paul called them: "Fit ministers of the New Testament" (Cor. iii). No one knew better than Our Saviour did, how wanting in the necessary qualifications for their calling were the men whom He selected to be His Apostles in the first instance. The life so many of them pursued—that of fishermen—while affording a useful apprenticeship in the patience so necessary in the apostolate, was not calculated to furnish the higher and indispensable gifts demanded in the teachers of a Gospel that was "to bring into captivity every understanding unto the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. x, 5). But it is instructive to notice that Our Lord, although almost to the day of the Ascension He had to complain of their slowness to apprehend what He taught and explained to them, never expressed the least misgiving—quite the contrary—as to their ability and efficiency once the Holy Ghost had come to them.

As to the Apostles themselves, the knowledge that the Holy Spirit would be sent to them gave them a full sense of security. From childhood they had

known that the word of God—that special possession of their people and the source of so much encouragement to them in every vicissitude of their history—came by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. They knew that God had chosen the simple and unlettered as well as the wise and learned, as prophets to speak His word to their fathers. It mattered little to them, then, what they were called to do while they had this source of light and strength to enlighten and sustain them. "I will ask the Father," said He, "and He shall give you another Paraclete, that He may abide with you for ever" (John xiv, 16). And again He said to them, "But the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things and bring to your mind whatsoever I shall have said to you" (John, xiv, 26). And further, He said to them: "But when the Spirit of Truth is come, He will teach you all truth" (John xvi, 13). They had the assurance, then, not alone of the coming of the Holy Ghost but of His stay, and this not indeed for their day only, but even for ever. "He shall give you another Paraclete that He may abide with you for ever." It could never occur to the Apostles, then or at any future time, that while it was their work to go abroad sowing in tears the Gospel seed through inhospitable lands, that it may fall in other days into the hands of successors who may allow its pure and sacred teachings to be mixed with erroneous doctrines. The Holy Ghost will see to it that such a thing shall never come about. "He will abide with you even for ever"; and He told them moreover, to what minute details the help of the Holy Ghost would reach. "The Paraclete, the Holy

Ghost whom the Father will send you in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I have said to you." It is not a mutilated Gospel, therefore, the Apostles and their successors shall preach, but the word of God that was heard in the Jewish assemblies and in the private gatherings of His disciples, from the lips of Christ, shall in its entirety be preserved and taught from age to age.

These promises that He would send the Holy Ghost were made by our Saviour to the Apostles on the eve of His passion. And though that impending trial flung then its shadow over Him, not it but the preaching of the Gospel engaged His thoughts, and His mind was busy with the preparations necessary to make the preaching of it a success. And after He was risen from the dead, and He had made by repeated apparitions the truth of His resurrection certain, His thoughts were again on the coming of the Holy Ghost. This indeed was the only great thing remaining now to give a finishing hand to His work, and set it on its way. Hence He would speak to the Apostles hardly of any other subject except that of the coming of the Holy Ghost. "And I send you the promise of My Father, but stay you in the city until you shall be endued with power from on high" (Luke xxiv, 49). "He commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but should wait for the promise of the Father . . . you shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you, and you shall be witnesses unto Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and even to the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts i, 4–8).

It is to be noted how careful Our Saviour was that

the Apostles should not venture upon their mission until the help of the Holy Ghost should reach them. On no less assured foundation would the Author of the Gospel have its message addressed to the world from the fallible lips of men. And just as the Holy Ghost was behind the words of the Prophets when they spoke to the Fathers in past ages, even so, the Apostles —taught though they were by the Son of God—shall not now come before the people with the word of God upon their lips, until the Holy Spirit has come to them to stamp His own seal of genuineness on their every word. With the preaching of the Gospel, a widening and ever-growing field of activity would stretch out before them. Soon, to the preaching of the Gospel would be added other cares and multifarious duties. But it is not God's way to turn from His work; rather it is His custom to watch over it with providential care, and assist it on its appointed course. And so Our Saviour, though parting from the world, and transferring His own work to other hands, would not abandon it, but would watch over it, and cherish and foster it. And therefore He assured His Apostles that His own watchful and helpful care, and His all-prevailing power will be ever at their back: "All power is given to Me in Heaven and on earth, going therefore, teach all nations, . . . teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you; and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world" (Matt. xxviii, 18–20). Though He would withdraw His visible presence from them, He would find a way of remaining with them too; and He was careful to make it known that this would be no

temporary arrangement, or an assistance for the earlier and more difficult years while the foundations of this work were being laid, but was to last to the very end of time. With assurances of such assistance and support, well indeed might they have felt at ease as to the future. The world assigned to them as the field of their labours may have its discouraging and forbidding features. Their work in it may be in reality rather a work for God than for feeble mortals. Yes, but with the unfailing help of the Holy Ghost and the added help of their Divine Master, who sent them on their mission and bade them have confidence for He had overcome the world (John xvi), they need not fear. He indeed did not hide from them what difficulties they should encounter, but with the assistance He had pledged to them, they would be equal to all difficulties: "In the world you shall have distress, but have confidence, I have overcome the world" (John xvi, 33). With calm and tranquil minds, when their Master had departed from them and returned back to heaven, they retired to the Upper Room in Jerusalem, as He had ordered them, and in silence and prayer they prepared themselves for the coming of the Holy Ghost.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Supremacy of Peter.

Here we might inquire: Did our Lord, when He transferred His own work to the Apostles and placed so great responsibility on them, give them a constitution of any kind to regulate their relations with each other: or did He make each of them an independant centre of missionary activity, bound to the others only by the ties of mutual charity and a common work and purpose? We may assume at once that He set up authority, which alone can ensure regularity and orderly discharge of functions, and we may be certain that He was careful to stamp the body that should bear His name before "the gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel" (Acts. ix), with that essential attribute. And indeed the Gospel is clear on this point. We learn from it that He established a central authority among them, placing it in the hands of one of them —Peter—and He invested him with supreme power. He Himself was Master in His day. "You call Me Master and Lord, and you say well, for so I am" (John iii). And He exercised rule over them by sending them to preach, and to execute what other commissions He wished (Matt. x; Luke xxii). From the Gospel it is clear, and from the traditions of the Church it is certain, that He put Peter in the position of control over the others in His own stead. Since, however, they had to go abroad into the world and become scattered far apart, there was but little oppor-

tunity of exercising control or authority over them ; nor indeed, in their very special circumstances, was there much occasion for anything of the kind—they were so much under the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit. But to exercise authority is one thing, to possess it is quite another ; and there is no doubt whatever about the establishment of supreme authority among the Apostles, and that Peter was invested with it.

From the outset Our Lord paid special attention to him above any of the other Apostles. When He first met him, Jesus, looking upon him said : " Thou art Simon the son of Jona, thou shalt be called Cephas, which is interpreted Peter " (John i, 42). " Simon whom He surnamed Peter " (Luke vi, 14). He surely did not change His disciple's name without a purpose. And amongst a people where names were not without a meaning, and when specially imposed—as in the case of Our Lord Himself, and long before Him in the case of Abraham, the Father of the Faithful—they were imposed because of their significance. When Our Lord gave Simon the name Peter, He did so because of the idea of control which it implied. And He explained this Himself on a subsequent occasion : " Thou art Peter " said He, " and upon this rock I will build My Church " (Matt. xvi, 18). Peter means a rock ; and what a rock when made the foundation of a building, is to the structure raised upon it, Peter is to the Church of Christ. Now, the foundation sustains and keeps the whole building together. If the foundation fails, the building falls to pieces. But a rock never fails. It will support whatever is raised upon it. Such Peter is to be

to the Church. Now the Church which Christ built is not a material structure but a social body, and like all societies of men, is kept together and governed by the authority that obtains in it, in whomsoever vested. Making Peter the foundation, He invested him then with supreme control. And this is brought out more clearly in the subsequent words Our Lord addressed to him: "And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth it shall be loosed also in heaven" (Matt. xvi, 19). Language has no more comprehensive terms than these.

Where everything is included nothing is excluded. In the Church which Christ was to establish Peter would hold the keys. What he would lay down would be sanctioned in heaven. That means supreme binding and governing power over the whole Church.

To Peter also, on a later occasion, He gave command to feed His lambs and His sheep. Appearing to the Apostles on the shore of the lake where they had been fishing during the night, after He had given them to eat, addressing Peter He put him the startling question: "Simon, son of Jona, lovest thou Me more than these?" He repeated this question three times, and receiving the answer in the affirmative each time, He ordered him to feed His lambs and His sheep (John xxi, 15–17). Under this figure Our Lord is understood to have invested Peter with supreme pastoral authority over His whole Church, subjecting everyone in it, whether in power or not, to his guiding and ruling authority. But not on Peter alone, at the same time was authority conferred. Our Lord commissioned all His Apostles to preach the Gospel. All as well, or rather with, Peter, received

the power of the Holy Ghost. All as well as he, received the power to bind and loose—a power so extensive that nothing is excepted in their commission either. "Whatsoever you shall bind upon earth shall be bound also in heaven, and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth shall be loosed also in heaven" (Matt. xviii, 18). Yes, Peter alone did not get the power to bind and to loose, just as he was not the only one commissioned to go and preach the Gospel. There are twelve Apostles in all, and to all is given the power necessary for the full exercise of the functions of the Apostolic office. But while all of them must preach, and each of them must bind and loose as occasion requires, to none of them apart did Our Lord address such words as He addressed to Peter alone: and on the other hand when He addressed the others Peter was amongst them. What He gave to them, He gave to Peter with them; and what He gave to Peter apart, He gave to him alone; and the words addressed to him alone are words that convey the grant of supreme power. "Whatsoever you shall bind," etc. The Apostles, then, were no loose body of men held together only by the elastic bonds of a common purpose and a common work. They had indeed a common purpose to bring all men to the knowledge and the service of God. They had also a commission to carry out with a view to that, viz., to preach the Gospel. But they were one body at the same time, placed under one head and chief, to whom was given full authority, so that they might effectively labour to that end. They did not, of course, hold authority to preach the Gospel from Peter, but if in the exercise of their ministry a point was to be settled upon which they were not clear,

they could turn to Peter for a definite and authoritative decision, and to him, as to their chief, they would naturally turn. And when laws had to be laid down—as their work developed, and a new state of things and new relations came into being, consequent on the success of their preaching—the chief was already there, whose authority was sovereign over all. And holding his authority direct and immediately from Our Lord, it was his to lay down what rules should hold good, and be imperative over the entire Church. Hence, as chief among his brethren, Peter takes the leading part from the first day. On the day of Pentecost " Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice and spoke to them " (Acts. ii, 14). When arrested shortly after for preaching, Peter answers and explains he must preach—must obey God who commands him preach, rather than men who forbid him (Acts iv, 19). Later on when a question was raised that required decision, Peter decides, and his word is accepted by the Apostles and others as final (Acts xv, 7). By and by, St. Paul, after he had spent some years of fruitful labour in spreading the Gospel, to satisfy himself as to the truth of his doctrine in all things, " goes up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and tarries with him fifteen days " (Gal. i). The successors of Peter in the Apostolic See ever exercised and were ever regarded as possessing supreme authority to teach and to rule the whole Church. St. Clement, the third in succession to St. Peter, and in the lifetime of St. John the Apostle, writes to the Corinthians to settle some questions there : and so on down the centuries. Now while Our Saviour thus bound up the Apostles into an organized body under the headship of Peter, within

their own special province He made them independent of all outside authority and powers. Whatsoever Peter and the others with him should bind or loose should prevail all over, and would be ratified in heaven. In the eyes of Our Divine Lord all distinctions of every kind among men seemed to melt away, and He looked upon them all, high and low, as the world to be converted by the preaching of the Gospel, and to be ruled by the Apostles into the observance of all things whatsoever He commanded. In their special province the Apostles were supreme, and all men, whether in power or in subjection "should seek the law from their mouth."

The doctrine of the Church on the authority of St. Peter and his Successors, the Roman Pontiffs, is defined in the following Decrees of the Vatican Council held in Rome, A.D. 1870 (Chap. i): "If anyone should say that Blessed Peter was not appointed by Christ the Lord, Prince over all the Apostles, and visible head of the whole Church Militant, or that he received a primacy of honour only, and did not receive directly and immediately from the same Jesus Christ Our Lord the primacy of jurisdiction truly and properly so called, let him be anathema." (Chap. ii): "If any one should say that it is not from the institution of Christ Our Lord Himself, and therefore by divine right that Blessed Peter in his primacy over the whole Church should always have Successors: or that the Roman Pontiff is not the Successor of Blessed Peter in the same primacy, let him be anathema." The same Council defined the doctrine of Papal Infallibility, explaining the conditions under which the Pope is to be understood as enjoying this charisma. When he speaks ex Cathedra, or when as

Pastor and Doctor of all Christians he lays down the teaching of the Church on some point of Faith or Morals, the Pope is infallible (Chap. iv, *Vatican Council*).

CHAPTER XIV.

Faith: the Condition on which the Teaching of Christ Our Saviour is to be accepted.

When Our Blessed Saviour "travelled through the cities and towns preaching and evangelizing the Kingdom of God" (Luke viii), His purpose was, while instructing in the "Gospel of the Kingdom", to bring the people to believe in Himself and in His teaching. Others expound and explain so that people may understand: He taught so that people would know and believe. The difference is found in the nature of the subjects treated. Our Lord spoke mostly of what is supernatural and divine: others treat of what is natural and intelligible. And while people understand what comes within the bounds of natural reason when properly explained to them, divine and supernatural truth lies hidden mostly above our reason.

And indeed Our Blessed Lord, in His own day, had but to look over the world to see that if religious truth was to take any hold of men there was nothing for it but to have it taught by one like Himself, on whose word the people could depend. All the nations in His time were steeped

in paganism. The whole world since His day, wherever His teaching has not penetrated, is steeped in paganism still. The Jews alone had any knowledge of God and of divine things in His time; but it required special supervision and special care to prevent them from falling away into the superstitions of their neighbours. Hence Our Divine Lord, who came to teach "the words of eternal life" (John vi), from the first day He appeared in public as a religious teacher, was careful not so much to explain His doctrine as to announce it, and to give while He taught, such evidence of His own identity as would help the people to believe His word. He was too sincere to waste time in discussions which the people could not follow. Besides, His doctrine was for all—the ignorant and learned alike; and while arguments and reasoning might lead the educated some way into the subjects He put before them, they would fall with little force on the ignorant and unlettered. Hence, while He unfolded His doctrine He gave proofs of all sorts to enable the people to see that He was what He professed to be, viz., the Son of God, and therefore entitled to their belief in Him. "Never did man speak like this man" (John vii), the people said when they heard Him speak. "They were in admiration of His doctrine, for He was teaching them as one having power" (Matt. vii). And while He showed a knowledge of human nature and of the yearnings and aspirations of the human heart from which nothing was wanting, and laid down the lines along which men were to be guided to perfection and happiness (Sermon of the Mount), He showed a mastery over external nature such as only the Author of it could possess. He changed water into

wine ; (John ii, 8) ; the storm ceased at His word (Luke viii, 24) ; He walked on the sea (John vi, 19) ; devils trembled at His presence, and fled at His command (Matt. viii, 38) ; He cured all kinds of diseases (Matt. xiv, 36) ; gave sight to the blind, and speech to the dumb ; He raised the dead from the grave (Luke vii, 14)—multiplied miracles, in short, of all sorts, and that during all the years of His public life. Then He died and rose again as He foretold (Matt. xvii, 9 ; Mark viii, 31).

For works such as these—works which He said Himself : " such as no other man hath done " (John xv, 24), and many things besides which are related in the Gospel, and many which are not related there, He claimed the faith of the people, and expected that they would believe in Him when He proclaimed Himself the Son of God. " If I do not the works of My Father believe Me not. But if I do, though you will not believe Me, believe the works ; that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father " (John x, 38).

Nor was His an otherwise unsupported claim ! When entering on His public life the Eternal Father openly proclaimed Him " His beloved Son " (Matt. iii, 17). " And behold a voice from heaven saying : This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased ; hear ye Him " (Matt. xvii,5). This was repeated on Mount Thabor, and to this St. Peter, who was present and heard, alludes in his Second Epistle where he says : " And this voice we heard brought from heaven, when we were with Him in the Holy Mount " (2 Pet. i). And St. John the Baptist, the last of the Prophets, as it were, to put an end to the office of that long line of men whose principal work was to foretell the coming of Christ, declares :

"And I saw (speaking of Our Lord) that this is the Son of God" (John i, 34). And what is very instructive to us in this connection is this, that Our Lord, instead of using His position as Son of God, to glorify Himself and impress the people, but turns it to account in favour of His teaching, that men may be the more ready to accept it. "My doctrine" He says, "is not Mine, but His that sent Me" (John vii, 16). And again He says: "I have not spoken of Myself but the Father who sent Me, He gave Me commandment what I should say and what I should speak" (John xii, 49). Qualified, then, to teach as our Blessed Saviour was, and commissioned and accredited with the credentials of His Eternal Father, and sustaining it all by the evidence of miracles, the force of which was patent to the most ignorant, well might He claim the faith of His hearers in whatever He should teach. Nor indeed did He claim it in vain, for many did believe. Nor could they be insensible to the example of His life, to the elevated character of His teaching, and the mysterious influence He exerted over all who came within the reach of His words. And even though the conviction produced by all these on unprejudiced minds, such as indeed was produced on the Jewish multitudes, may not be faith, strictly so called—which is a "conviction beyond the evidence" and is the result of light and grace to enable one to believe—it was faith of a sort anyhow, and the best preparation for real supernatural faith, which is the effect of the grace of God. But there is no doubt that Our Lord required the people to believe in Him, and blamed them if they did not. Having given such evidence in support of His teaching; having multiplied

proofs of His divinity for all except the wilfully blind to see—He held them responsible if, disregarding or indifferent to that evidence, they failed to believe. "If I had not done among them the works that no other man hath done, they would not have sin" (John xv, 24). "Woe to thee Corozain, woe to thee Bethsaida. For if in Tyre and Sidon had been wrought the mighty works that had been wrought in you, they would have done penance long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes" (Luke x, 13). He blamed the people, therefore, who had seen and believed not, and He did not inculpate them beyond their due. On the other hand, He used every encouragement to bring men to the faith. Faith was a condition precedent to His miracles in relief of distress. "O woman, great is thy faith, be it done to thee as thou wilt" (Matt. xv, 28). And He declared that nothing was impossible to one who had faith—even to move mountains. Then by faith, and faith alone, one became numbered amongst His followers. He gave a striking evidence of this at an early date in His public career. It was on the occasion of His discourse about the Real Presence in the Blessed Eucharist. When His disciples heard Him declare: "Except you eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His Blood you shall not have life in you" (John vi, 54), without waiting for an explanation, which indeed He did not give, they complained: "This saying is hard and who can believe it." And though the Scripture tells us: "after this many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him", Our Lord, far from offering a word of explanation which would have made the great truth easy, once they did not take Him at His word and trust Him, He

not alone allowed them to go their way, as many of them did, but turning to the Apostles, whom He evidently was prepared to sacrifice also if they did not believe, He asked them: "Will you too go away?" But Simon Peter answered Him: Lord to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life; we have believed and have known that Thou art Christ the Son of God" (John vi, 68–70). With the bond of an undoubting faith would He have His followers bound to Him—all who were not so united to Him were none of His.

Nor in truth need this surprise us. Faith in the supernatural—even in its most vague and indefinite form, is a necessary condition of worship. Belief in a Supreme Being is the motive spring of the worship of the savage. Our Lord recognizing this, only made the objects of faith more definite and distinct. But whatever those objects are, whatever the truths that are proposed to our belief, they all stand in the same position and light in reference to faith. Faith considers only that what we believe is proposed to us by the word of God. On the authority of His word one is safe in believing anything; satisfied that in His word one has an infallible witness—a witness at once incapable of deceiving or misleading, and equally incapable of being deceived or mistaken.

The governing motive of faith, then, being the word of God, there is no question of a thing being hard or easy to believe. The man with faith does not make his mind or judgment the test of what to believe or what not to believe. He tests one thing and one alone: has God spoken or has He not? And indeed if Our Lord did not now insist upon faith, what other security have we when

it is a question of what is divine or supernatural? In such things, God's word is not only the best but our only security. At best "we know in part what we know at all." God alone knows all things, and all things under all aspects. But things supernatural and divine are manifestly above our power of knowledge. Then, what might bring conviction to an Archangel in reference to supernatural truths, e.g., would be thrown away on us. We should fail to see the force of the argument. Hence where reason fails and such proofs as have force with us are inadequate, there is nothing for us but the word of God. Hence our Lord propounding divine things to mortal men gave no proofs, but taught His doctrine; and sense and religion alike approve His action. Of one thing alone did He give reasons for belief, viz., that He who spoke to them was God. In the hidden things of God which are taught by faith, wisdom and sense alike counsel belief in God, doubt only in ourselves. And the same full and undoubting faith Our Lord requires in the teaching of the Apostles, to whom He entrusted the preaching of the Gospel.

From what we have said above touching the preparation He made to fit them for their task, we can easily understand this. Indeed at all times God took care that His word once spoken would be preserved pure and unadulterated. The Jews possessed it at the time of Christ, the self-same that was delivered to their fathers by the prophets. Our Saviour was not to be less careful, and this all the more so because of the sanctions He had given now to His word in the lips of His appointed teachers. And unless we should

say that His promise of unfailing help should fail, how could it be otherwise? And was the Holy Ghost to fail in His mission of recalling to the minds of the Apostles all that they had heard from their Master's lips? Was He to prove not able to teach them all truth, as He was promised to do? It mattered little how unsuited to their task the Apostles were. It was not a question of their fitness but of the power of the Holy Ghost to make them fit "ministers of the Gospel." But we must deny the omnipotence of God and the divinity of the Third Person, to doubt His power to make the Apostles and their duly appointed successors after them, for all time, worthy ministers of God's word—if we should withhold from their teaching the faith we are prepared to give to the same teaching when delivered by their Master. Having secured the unfailing help of the Holy Ghost, and having promised His own equally unfailing help till the end of time, He definitely guaranteed the genuineness of the Gospel teaching in the hands of those who are duly appointed to teach it. And as in His own case, by a manifold display of divine power during His public life, He removed every reasonable ground for hesitating to receive His message as the word of God; so when it came to the turn of men who were but human and fallible, He so fortified them with divine help that the world in all ages should have the word of God direct from God Himself, even though He should speak with a human voice through the mouths of men. Hence, sending them on their mission He said to them: "Go ye into the whole world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized

shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned" (Mark xvi, 15, 16).

And though the Apostles have long since passed away, and though their teaching in the after ages was denied and contradicted, and though all that is most powerful in this world was arrayed against it oftentimes—the strength of empires and the subtlety of genius—it lives in the Church to this day in all its first purity and efficiency, appealing to and captivating the strongest intellects as the weakest, and subjugating the hearts of ever-increasing millions to its divine and consoling verities.

The fundamental condition of God's service, therefore, required by Our Lord is faith in His teaching—faith in His teaching as it was announced by Himself and the Apostles in their day, and by their duly appointed successors ever after them. Having selected His Apostles and instructed them; having given them their commission to preach, and organized them under One Supreme Head, Our Saviour had His Church ready made, waiting only for the coming of the Holy Ghost to animate it with the breath of life, and speed it in its course.

CHAPTER XV.

The Coming of the Holy Ghost.

On the instruction of their Divine Master, the Apostles returned to Jerusalem from Mount Olivet, awaiting the coming of the Holy Ghost. "Then they returned to Jerusalem from the Mount that is called Olivet" (Acts i, 12). They had just come through a succession of experiences that could not fail to make a deep and lasting impression upon them. Every apparition of their Divine Master left a deeper and more conscious feeling upon them of His wonderful being and nature. As they looked upon His Sacred Body that they had known so well, now radiant with a new and unexampled freshness and life—that body which death was powerless to control, and that in its every feature, as in its mysterious activities, bore the sensible evidence of the Divinity that was enshrined within it—faith in Him grew upon them like an overpowering sentiment and conviction. Then all His instructions to them about the future, which looked like something present to Him, made them feel that in Him they were dealing with One who was above all time, and in whose hands was the shaping of all things if He but so wished. But if their experience of Him had impressed anything on them it was precisely this, that He did not take into His own hands the shaping of events and the turn out of things. They knew now and believed as they could not have believed before, that not by His power as God but rather by His weakness and sufferings as man

He redeemed the world. And they recalled that when important issues were pending, and He was anxious for success, He sought it, not by the exercise and display of power, but by humble and persevering prayer. Hence now when He was gone, and the time was closing in when they must come out into the open and challenge a not too friendly world on its beliefs, and try to win it into obedience to the Gospel, not shrinking from the task, but with quiet confidence they did what they saw their Master do—they turned to God by prayer, and so employed they prepared themselves while waiting for the coming of the Holy Ghost. St. Luke in the Acts of the Apostles gives the facts : " Then they returned to Jerusalem from the Mount that is called Olivet . . . and when they were come they went up to an upper room, where abode Peter and John, James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James of Alpheus, and Simon Zelotes, and Jude the brother of James" (Acts i, 12, 13). "All these were persevering with one mind in prayer" (Acts i, 14). But they had not long to wait. Pentecost, one of the great Jewish festivals, was approaching ; and just as at the Pasch, Jews came from distant places beyond the boundaries of Judea to take part in this great national festival, they did the same thing also for the feast of Pentecost. And as Our Lord would be sacrificed in the presence of the Jewish race at the Paschal time, so now when the Holy Ghost would come to inaugurate the new dispensation, He would avail of the presence in Jerusalem of this people to whom the Gospel was to be first announced, to come, and make His coming known to them. It is all recorded by St.

Luke in the Acts: "And when the days of Pentecost were accomplished, they were all together in one place: and suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty wind coming, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them parted tongues as it were of fire, and it sat upon every one of them; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they began to speak with divers tongues, according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak. Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men out of every nation under heaven. And when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded in mind, because that every man heard them speak in his own tongue. And they were all amazed and wondered, saying: Behold are not all these that speak Galileans? And how have we heard, every man our own tongue wherein we were born? Parthians and Medes, Elamites and inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphilia, Egypt and the parts of Lybia about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome. Jews also, and Proselytes, Cretes, and Arabians; we have heard them speak in our own tongues the wonderful works of God" (Acts ii, 1–11). The moment the Holy Ghost came to them and kindled in their hearts the fire of faith, the Apostles felt a burning desire to make known the message of salvation to their brethren. Carried away by this feeling they were alive to no other, and they spoke with such power—Peter especially, who took the leading part—that thousands were converted to the faith that same day. As he preached Christ, whom they had so recently crucified, but who was now risen and glorious;

and pointed out to them, quoting the Scriptures, how the prophecies referring to the Redeemer were verified in Him—many were so affected that they sought advice from the Apostles as to what to do. "Now when they heard these things they had compunction in their hearts, and said to Peter and to the rest of the Apostles: What shall we do, men and brethren? But Peter said to them: Do penance and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of your sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts ii, 37, 38). "They therefore that received his word were baptized, and there were added in that day about three thousand souls" (Acts ii, 41).

In this account of the events of the day of Pentecost we have evidence of what sufficing help Our Lord had in readiness for His Apostles when He entrusted His Gospel to them. However they may have felt within themselves beforehand, the moment the Holy Ghost came and kindled in their hearts the fire of faith, they had misgivings no longer; and they could suffer no delay, but must go out at once, and impart if possible to everyone about, the faith they had themselves received. They had the gift of tongues also, and were able to address themselves to every hearer, and they had what was better, viz., the power of effective speaking. They could touch the heart of their hearers and bring them to repentance as well as to the faith.

And their success on that day was only the first of a series of successes that was continued to the end of their lives. Very soon afterwards it is said: "Many who had heard the word believed and the number of men was made five thousand" (Acts iv, 4). And

presently it is added: "And the multitude of men and women who believed in the Lord was more increased" (Acts v, 14). And soon afterwards we read: "And the word of the Lord increased; and the number of the disciples was multiplied in Jerusalem exceedingly: a great multitude of the priests also obeyed the faith" (Acts vi, 7). And this now in the face of direct and powerful opposition.

The success of the Apostles in winning numbers to the faith in Our Lord Jesus Christ and His Gospel (for faith in Him was the burden of all their preaching, for as they said, there is no other name under heaven given to men whereby we must be saved) very soon created enemies and stirred up opposition. They were summoned before the Council at Jerusalem and ordered not to preach any longer in His name. But Peter and John addressing the Council, said: "If it be just in the sight of God to hear you rather than God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak of the things we have seen and heard" (Acts iv, 18–20). "Now seeing the constancy of Peter and John, understanding that they were illiterate and ignorant men they wondered; and they knew them that they had been with Jesus" (Acts iv, 13). This was the puzzle to the unbelieving, to see the calm, unshaken constancy of illiterate men preaching the mysteries of Redemption, and making numerous converts from among the learned and the unlearned both. And the greatest surprise of all to find numbers of priests abandoning their own traditional and exclusive caste, and becoming learners from men they were wont to teach, of the deeper mysteries of the new and better faith.

The work of the Apostles was now well begun, and every day added fresh followers. Their impressive earnestness in speaking, and for illiterate men their large and ready use of the Scriptures, and their power of apt quotation (Acts), and then the new and striking aid of miracles, and this to such an extent that the shadow of Peter was capable of curing diseases (Acts v, 15), all these impressed the people and prepared the way for numbers to the faith. Besides, there was the personal piety of the Apostles, their utter unworldliness, and their practices of frequent prayer. But above all there was the power and influence of the Holy Ghost granted on purpose to ensure success. And there was never such success as that of the Apostles in these early days. The fervour of the converts was so great that they renounced the private ownership of their means, and gave all they possessed for the benefit of the new community that grouped itself around the Apostles. And this brought about in the face of persecution! They were summoned before the Council and forbidden to preach (Acts v, 40). "They laids hands on the Apostles and put them in the common prison" (Acts v, 18); "and calling in the Apostles after they had scourged them." But punishment and imprisonment instead of making them desist had rather the opposite effect, for we read: "And they indeed went from the presence of the Council rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus. And every day they ceased not in the temple and from house to house to teach and preach Jesus Christ" (Acts v, 42). With the grace of the Holy Ghost in their hearts, and His light in their minds—which enabled them to see the

meaning of the things they had so recently witnessed in their Master, they were filled with faith and a burning zeal to communicate to others the light they enjoyed themselves. Hence it is said of them: "With great power did the Apostles give testimony of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ Our Lord, and great grace was in them all" (Acts iv, 33). And in truth they should be more or less than human if, now when they saw in the light of the Holy Ghost the manner of life of their Divine Master, His wonderful and unexampled teaching, His superhuman patience under suffering and reproach, the wonders that took place at His death, His resurrection to a new and glorious life, His ascension into heaven, and last of all the coming of the Holy Ghost, with all its elevating and transforming effects upon themselves—if their faith in their Master was not a conviction and a sentiment beyond anything men had ever known. And because such it was, their one ambition now was to preach Him: "We preach Christ crucified" (1 Cor. i). And in announcing His Gospel, while they were obeying God who commanded them to preach it to every creature, they felt it a duty, regardless of opposition and contradiction, to continue to preach. For they felt "we ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts v, 29).

CHAPTER XVI.

The Church.

In the success that attended the preaching of the Apostles, we see a new and striking sign of the power and influence of Jesus Christ. In His personal career we have seen Him incomparable. When that career is over He shows Himself more incomparable still. He had now passed out of this life ; His personal labours had ceased ; His place in the world had come to an end. Yet the hands to whom His work had fallen, though very human hands, show themselves the moment they enter upon that work, so transformed by the influence He could bring to bear upon them, that they became leaders of men.

Humble fishermen, most of them unlettered, they came out in the open at Jerusalem, and with the gift of tongues to address themselves to every hearer, they spoke with such persuasiveness and power that hundreds, aye, thousands, abandon their lifelong beliefs to follow their teaching ! Hundreds who that day of Pentecost rose up to join in the Jewish festival, before the sun went down had given up for good the faith of their fathers, and became believers in the divinity of Christ, for whose death a few weeks before some of them may not be altogether without blame. Nor was this but a sudden impulse, the effects of which after a while would pass away. From the day of Pentecost onwards the movement initiated by the Apostles grew and gained strength daily, and soon became one of the best known

and most active forces wherever it appeared. The Apostles themselves are untiring in their activity—preaching in public and private. Their name has gone abroad far and wide through many lands. The good tidings they bear with them is that the redemption of the world has been accomplished through the death of their Divine Master: that though He died as man upon the cross for our redemption, He rose again from the dead as God for our resurrection and happiness. And so clearly do they show Him to be the Redeemer foretold by the prophets, and long since expected by the Jewish people (Acts x): "To Him all the Prophets give testimony," that numbers constantly come over to the faith. In the records of these early days one frequently comes upon such statements as these: "And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believing was converted to the Lord" (Acts xi, 21); "A very great multitude both of the Jews and of the Greeks did believe" (Acts xiv, 1). In these converts—who at first are called "believers" (Acts iv), "disciples" (Acts v), or "the faithful" (Acts x)—who gathered around the Apostles believing in their teaching and seeking guidance and direction from them, we see the beginning of the Church; and indeed, when they are spoken of collectively in any place they are called the Church in that place. Thus it is said: "At that time there was raised a great persecution against the Church which was at Jerusalem" (Acts viii, 1). Again we read: "a great number believing was converted to the Lord, and tidings came to the ears of the Church which was at Jerusalem" (Acts xi, 22). Again it is said: "Now there was in

the Church which was at Antioch" (Acts xiii, 1); and again: "Now the Church had peace throughout all Judea and Galilee, and Samaria" (Acts ix, 31). And so, as the Apostles went about preaching Jesus Christ and His Gospel everywhere, the Church came into existence as the people came to believe. And as we know from the records of the time—the Acts, and the Epistles of the Apostles—the faith spread very rapidly, and considerable numbers were already enrolled in all the large centres of population, not in Judea only but in the neighbouring countries round about. In the cities of Western Asia and Southern Europe as well as in places of less note in these parts, great numbers embraced the faith.

But as the teaching of the true faith was subversive of the beliefs and practices everywhere prevalent, especially outside Judea, opposition was very soon directed against the Church. The religious ideas that had largely entered into the life of the people, and that influenced their conduct both public and private, could not be assailed by a new and active propaganda, no matter how cautiously pursued, without stirring up violent opposition. Hence the threats, and imprisonment, and scourgings used against the Apostles in the early days of their preaching, and the persecution of the faithful in the early days in the provinces and cities of Palestine soon after (Acts xii). And this was a regular experience of the Church all through the first centuries of its existence. But persecution was unavailing. Individuals suffered, and died, and went to heaven to receive the martyr's crown, but the Church progressed; for there was a power within it and behind it against

which all opposition was vain. And when the Apostles, like many after them, had to bow their heads to the stroke of the executioner, they did so with no misgivings for the Church, for they knew that her strength was not from them—that she was built up, not by the hands of men but by the power of God, which would never fail. "Behold," said their Master, "I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world"; and again He said: "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. xviii). They had seen it in their day and believed. They believed it would be the same to the end, and history has justified their faith and will continue to justify it. "For faith did not stand on the wisdom of men but on the power of God" (1 Cor. ii, 5).

But to believe what the Apostles preached was not merely to exchange false notions of religion or antiquated beliefs for the truths of faith. When they preached Christ crucified for our sins, and men came to know and believe, they saw in that striking revelation of God's goodness and mercy an appeal to the sinner that went direct to the heart. And with the new and true faith, in answer to the appeal of God suffering and dying, came a real conversion of heart, and a desire to do penance. Hence, as St. Peter on the day of Pentecost unfolded the story of the passion and death of his Divine Master, and explained the causes that brought about so awful a tragedy, those who came to the faith, feeling in their hearts a sense of guilt on account of their sins, in their distress turned to the Apostles seeking advice and saying: "What shall we do: men and brethren" (Acts ii). There is a striking illustration of this change

of heart in the case of St. Paul. When the light of faith was flashed on the mind of this wonderful man from the presence of Our Lord who appeared to him and he came to believe, he was a changed man at once, and in the fullness of his whole-hearted renunciation he cried out: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts ix, 6). In the first converts at Jerusalem we see a spirit of sacrifice that has been the admiration of all subsequent ages. So detached did they become that they renounced all private ownership of property, and placed everything in common for the good of the new community that grouped itself around the Apostles (Acts iv). The word of Christ: "Blessed are the poor in spirit," did not reach them in vain!

We see a like spirit in a larger and more enduring practice manifest itself in the early Irish Church. For centuries after the faith was preached in Ireland by St. Patrick, all over the land religious communities of immense proportions flourished, in which, with the vows of poverty and obedience the severest austerities were practiced. And though the fervour of those days is not matched by what one finds anywhere to-day except in the strictest religious houses, the spirit of penance and the practice of doing penance for sin, from first to last is inseparably associated with the Church. And when St. Peter, on the day of Pentecost, exhorted his first converts to do penance, what was it but handing on to the Church the teaching of his Master who began His own public mission and His first exhortation with this same advice: "From this time Jesus began to preach and to say: Do penance for the Kingdom of God is at hand" (Matt. x).

The Church: Necessity of Membership of it.

Now this "Kingdom of God" which is the Church of Christ, of which He spoke often during His public life (Matt. xviii), and which, as we have seen, grew into being as the Apostles preached the Gospel, differs from all other institutions in this respect among others: that all men are bound to become members of it, once it is made known to them. The condition in which Our Lord found the world when He came amongst us, in reference to the knowledge and service of God, made it clear to Him, did He not know it beforehand, that if He were to do any permanent good among men they were to be left no longer to their own counsel and to their desires in the matter of religious truth and practice. Nor was it enough to teach the truth once for all, even if He had found that an easy matter. But He had not found it easy. To bring men to see and believe His revelation and, in spite of all the wonders of His life, to bring them to recognize Himself as the heaven-sent Saviour and Redeemer, His own efforts did not suffice—it was necessary to send the Holy Ghost, the Third Divine Person, to enable men to recognize Him and believe in Him. Now the Holy Ghost, as He required an organ through which to address the people, as He needed the prophets in the past He needed the Apostles now; and for the future He needed their regularly appointed successors if the preaching of the Gospel was to continue, as it was necessary it should continue, and go down unimpaired to future ages. At the hands, then, of these men, who were divinely chosen in the first instance, and of their

duly appointed successors, who are the organs of the Holy Ghost, must men seek the truths and teachings of Faith. To them must men look for guidance and light if they would be saved from the errors and ignorance of the past—from which indeed men must be saved if they would fulfil the purpose of their existence at all, and reach the destiny for which they were created, viz., to know and serve God here, so as to be happy with Him for ever hereafter.

It was not without necessity that our Divine Lord preached His Gospel: and that in the face of opposition and contradiction, and through much sacrifice and humiliation. It was not without necessity He prepared, with so much care and patience, those who were to preach it after Him. It was not without necessity He sent to them and to their successors the Holy Spirit, guaranteeing thus by a divine and infallible safeguard the genuineness of the Gospel message to all future times. All this personal labour, all this forethought and care, that included the sending of another Divine Person to preside over the work of the Church and secure its immunity from error—to secure that in the whole field of its administration it would be inspired and guided by the Spirit of God, meant that since only by the truth of religion both in belief and practice men can be saved, they must seek it where alone they can find it, viz., in the Church, which the Son of God founded on purpose to furnish it. And as there was but small hope for anyone who refused to listen to Him, and accept His teaching in His day: "If I had not come and spoken to them they would not have sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin" (John xv,

22), when He commissioned His Apostles to preach the same "Gospel of the Kingdom", the same "Word of Life", in His Name, there was as little hope for any who were indifferent about what they preached and declined to believe it. Even in His own day, before they had yet received the Holy Spirit, sending them to preach, He said: "Whosoever shall not receive you nor hear your words, going forth out of that house or city shake off the dust from your feet. Amen I say to you, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment than for that city" (Matt. x, 14, 15). And sending them into the whole world, to preach the Gospel, He said: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be condemned" (Mark xvi, 16). Now to believe what the Apostles preached and to be baptized was to go through the process by which the Church came into existence in the beginning. So that it comes to the same thing to say one cannot be saved who does not believe and is not baptized, as to say one cannot be saved who does not enter and belong to the Church —who by faith and baptism is not become a member of it.

It will help us very much to realize this important truth if we consider the attitude of the Apostles themselves and examine how they acted in reference to it. The words of our Lord: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be condemned," could not be more explicit. Nor can we regard it as other than due to a special providence that we have these words on record. The Scriptures, as is well known, do not contain a tithe of what Our Blessed

Saviour said and did during His public life (John xxi, 25.) But His every utterance, and His mind generally on all matters of moment were well known to the men who had the privilege of personal association with Him during the years of His public ministry. Now when we meet these men they are not acting any longer from themselves alone—on their own sole initiative. They are now the organs of the Holy Ghost, who was come to recall to their minds whatever their Divine Master had said to them: "the Holy Ghost whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind whatsoever I shall have said to you" (John xiv, 26). Now with a constancy, as we have already noticed, that is astonishing, in the face of threats and punishment, they speak out and declare before the first tribunals of the land (Acts iv), before governors and magistrates (Acts xxiv), as well as before the multitudes that come to hear them, that, think what men will, there is now no other hope of salvation but in their Divine Master, Jesus Christ, for that there is no other name under Heaven given to men whereby we must be saved (Acts iv, 12). This doctrine they proclaimed to the world. And from the day of Pentecost onwards till their death, these men cannot rest, but must preach Him and His Gospel, persuading people everywhere that He is the Redeemer that came to die for them and rose again (Acts xxiv). And they preach Him not to their own people and in their own country only, but, what was unknown among the Jews up to then, they go out to the stranger and they make His name and His doctrine known among the Gentiles. They travel far and wide over land and sea. They face all

sorts of dangers. They go to the very strongholds of Paganism and they preach the unknown God as the only true God, as St. Paul did at Athens (Acts xvii, 22, 23). Trials and sufferings they count as nothing if only they make His name known, and bring people to believe in Him (Acts and Epistles). And wherever they went they had success ; and of those to whom they preached it could be said : " Many indeed of them believed, and of honourable women that were Gentiles, and of men not a few " (Acts xvii, 12). But whether it was a single individual that came to believe, or a multitude in some large centre where one Apostle or another happened to be preaching, none were left to themselves uncared for and at large, but one by one all were put through the same process of being baptized on believing, and so were added to the Church. What we read of the first converts at Jerusalem (Acts ii, x), we read of Lydia of Thyatira : " she was baptized and her household " (Acts xvi, 15), and of the prison-keeper of Philippi : " and himself was baptized and all his house " (Acts xvi, 33). We read the same of the citizens of Corinth : " and many of the Corinthians hearing, believed and were baptized " (Acts xviii, 8), and so were made members of the Church. And so the footsteps of the Apostles could be traced over the east and the west, and the monuments of their preaching were the flourishing churches to be found in the best known centres of the time. In Jerusalem and Antioch, and in all the cities of Asia Minor ; in the capitals of Greece, Athens and Corinth ; and in Rome itself, the centre of the world—the Apostles preached the Gospel of their Master, and converted numbers to the faith, and made

them members of the Church. And with the sense of the world-embracing scope and purpose of His mission, St. Peter, who was the first head and chief of the Church, in Rome, the Capital of the world, beside the throne of the Emperors, fixed his own chair of authority ; so that the same city, which was mistress of the world, might be the seat of supreme authority and teaching for all the faithful, in the kingdom founded by the Son of God which was destined to enjoy a wider and more enduring sway than imperial Rome ever did.

The one thought in the mind of all the Apostles from the day of Pentecost—the one purpose to which they devoted their lives and energies, was the preaching of the Gospel and the spread of the faith. All of them felt with St. Paul: " Woe is unto me if I do not preach the Gospel" (1 Cor. ix). That " he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," was ever in their ears, and " the charity of Christ pressing them " (2 Cor. v), they preached everywhere as they were commanded, and like St. Paul again " they became all things to all men, that they might save all" (1 Cor. ix). And the evidence of their work and success was the churches which they founded as they went, into which they gathered all who came to believe. And having founded the Church in the different places which they visited, when opportunity offered they returned again to further instruct and confirm the converts in the faith. " And after some days Paul said to Barnabas: Let us return and visit our brethren in all the cities wherein we have preached the word of the Lord, to see how they do" (Acts xv, 36). And when to return was difficult or impossible they addressed letters to them. All the Epistles

of St. Paul are letters addressed to the various churches he had established in his missionary journeys. With the words of their Divine Master ever in their ears, and His life history ever before their minds, and with the fire of the Holy Ghost within their hearts, they knew no rest but in gathering people to the Church, which they knew was the only ark of salvation.

And the deliberate manner in which they carried on their work—how careful they were to have the Church properly established in one place before proceeding to another, conveys what idea they had of the essential part the Church was henceforth to play in the religious life of the people. Though anxious to press forward and open up new ground, there was no haste. Each Church was capable of taking care of itself, and of extending its boundaries before the Apostles who founded it went elsewhere. Jerusalem was the home of more than one Apostle for a considerable time in the beginning. Antioch, the great metropolis of trade with the East, was for years the theatre of the labours of St. Peter. The converts had grown so numerous there, and were so well known as a separate body that to them belongs the distinction of being the first of the faithful to receive the name Christians (Acts xi, 26). But whether it was Antioch or Corinth or some other centre, and whether the stay was long or short, the practice was uniform—that they did not pass on to another place until "they had ordained to them priests in every church" (Acts xiv, 22). "For this cause I left thee in Crete," wrote St. Paul to Titus, "that thou shouldst ordain priests in every city, as I also appointed thee" (Titus i, 5). And "then having prayer with fasting, they commended

them to the Lord, in whom they had believed" (Acts xiv, 22), and so passed on to another centre to repeat the same process.

And while they ordained priests, and consecrated bishops whom they appointed, like Titus, in the larger centres, they used every care in the selection and promotion of these. "Impose not hands lightly on any man" (1 Tim. v, 22), was St. Paul's instruction to Timothy who was then Bishop at Ephesus. No one was appointed to an office except on the ground of virtue and merit. Even deacons were select men; men of approved virtue and discretion, though their office was a humbler and more ministerial one (Acts vi). Writing to Timothy, St. Paul says of them: "Let these also first be proved, and so let them minister" (Tim. iii, 10). Timothy himself, who was long an intimate associate of St. Paul, and though highly distinguished for his faith and virtue from the first, he would carefully train, and hold back for a long time, before he would raise him to the Episcopate. And his letters to him when a bishop reveal the anxious mind of the Apostle about the purity of his doctrine, and the correctness of the language in which he was to express it. "Hold the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me in faith" (2 Tim. i, 13). And again he says: "Keep the good thing committed to thy trust by the Holy Ghost" (2 Tim. i, 14). And the solicitude of the Apostles about the virtue and doctrine of those whom they had raised to high office in the Church was not for their own sakes only, but because they were now teachers of the faithful, and associates with themselves in preaching the Gospel and handing on its doctrines to others.

"The things which thou hast heard of me by many witnesses, the same commend to faithful men who shall be fit to teach others also" (2 Tim. ii, 2). Just as Our Lord taught the Apostles so that they could teach others afterwards what they had learned themselves, so the Apostles, in their turn, after the example of their Master, and from their own sense of its necessity, spared no pains in instructing both bishops and clergy, who were to be their associates in teaching in their day, and their successors when their day was spent. Now this solicitude in teaching and training those who were to be their helpers first, and their successors afterwards in the ministry, and that anxiety even up to the forms of expression they had taught them to use, finds its meaning and explanation in those words of their Master: "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be condemned." So much depended on believing what was preached that they must make sure to preach only the truth that was taught to themselves. And as faith in the doctrine taught and Baptism were indispensable for salvation, and as by faith and by Baptism people became actual members of the Church, from first to last it is clear that to be saved one must be a member of the Church.

Again, the commission given to the Apostles was not confined to teaching what the people were to believe. They had to instruct them also in the practices to be observed. "Going therefore teach all nations, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt. xxviii). And just as we have no record, under the hand of the Apostles, of the full Gospel message which they preached, so too, but

even more so, we can gather but little from what has been written by them of what they taught the people to observe. Nor indeed is this surprising! Their mission was to preach, and most of them took the commission literally and wrote nothing at all. Writing did not recommend itself to any of them as a satisfactory way of conveying their message; nor indeed was it effective for reaching the audience they had to address. To read then, was a privilege of the few; while writing had difficulties of its own, because facilities for writing were not easily available. Besides that, by speech God was ever accustomed to make known His will, and when sending His prophets to declare it for Him the usual formula was: "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them", for "Faith,"as St. Paul says, "cometh by hearing" (Rom. x). Now when the word of God was delivered, not to a solitary individual, to one prophet or another, but to a body of men whose mission was to be continued to all future time by an unfailing succession of duly appointed and duly qualified teachers, there was no need to write down what they were to preach. If men, then, would know the mind of God as to what to believe and what to observe, they must learn it from those who are commissioned to teach it, and on whose living word they must rely, at the peril of salvation. Now they had heard new commandments as well as a new Gospel, and not a commandment of charity only: "That you love one another" (John xiii), but moral and religious precepts also. Many things that they had heard their Master speak about during His public life were matters of religion and worship, and more than once He suggested,

if not distinctly foretold, the end of the Jewish religion (John iv, 21). The figures and types of the Old Dispensation were soon to give place to the realities they had foreshadowed. And the manna of the fathers would give place to the real Bread from heaven, on which the faithful would henceforth be nourished (John vi). At the Last Supper, after the Paschal Lamb was eaten they witnessed the introduction of a New Sacrifice, and there and then they received the commission to repeat the same Sacrifice in remembrance of their Master. "Do this for a commemoration of Me." (Luke xxii, 19). They saw then the end of the Old Law and the beginning of the New; and they came to realize that they were made, not preachers of the New Gospel only, but priests of the New Testament also. What commands He gave them in reference to the new worship He was now introducing, we can learn but little from what they left behind them in writing. For this knowledge, as for the equally necessary knowledge as to the place assigned to the faithful and their duties in reference to it, we must go to themselves and to their recognized successors. Nor is it possible to discharge the duties of religion the materials of which, like the doctrines of faith, are entrusted to the hands of the Apostles and their successors unless by actual contact with them within the Church, in which divine worship is properly organized and surrounded with due and appropriate ceremonial. For faith and worship and for all the influences which the religion of the Redeemer confers on its votaries, membership of the Church is indispensable. In confirmation of what has been hitherto stated, the words of the Vatican Council,

1870, are opportune: "The Eternal Pastor and Bishop of our souls, to render perpetual the saving work of Redemption, decreed to build His Church, in which as in the house of the living God, all the Faithful would be united in the bonds of one Faith and Charity."

CHAPTER XVII.

The Church—*Continued.*

What the words of Our Lord: what the words and actions of the Apostles so clearly prove, the history of religious controversies, and the rise and spread of heresies confirm to us, viz., the necessity of being within the fold of the Church for that necessary guidance which alone secures the purity of teaching and faith without which it is impossible to please God. "Other sheep I have," said Our Saviour, "that are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice and there shall be one fold and one shepherd" (John x, 16). Into His Church all must be received, even those whom He recognizes as His though not yet within it, so that there shall be one fold under one shepherd.

But He did not fail to warn us beforehand that once within the Church we are not to imagine that all dangers to the faith are past. Men will arise whose purpose it will be to teach false doctrines, so as to attract followers to themselves. "Beware of false prophets who come to you in the clothing of sheep but inwardly they are ravening wolves." (Matt. vii, 15). And on another occasion He said: "Many false prophets shall rise and

shall seduce many" (Matt. xxiv, 11). And very soon indeed such false teachers arose, and to save the faithful from their pernicious influence was a new and grievous concern even for the Apostles. St. Paul, addressing the Bishops at Ephesus when leaving Asia for good, like Moses long before him addressing the Israelites for the last time, warned them that after his departure men would arise who would corrupt the doctrine he had taught them, and would try to lead many away from the faith "I know that after my departure ravening wolves will enter in among you, not sparing the flock; and of your own selves shall arise men speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them; therefore watch" (Acts xx, 29, 30). And one of his constant troubles was contending against such sowers of false doctrines among his converts; and his letters are proof that he felt all was lost with his disciples if they failed to stand by the doctrines he had preached to them. "Oh! senseless Galatians," said he, "who hath bewitched you that you should not obey the truth?" (Gal. iii, 1); and before that he had written: "But though we or an angel from heaven preach a Gospel to you besides that which you have received, let him be anathema" (Gal. i, 8).

The other Apostles in their Epistles make reference to the same danger to the faith, arising from the unauthorized preaching of men who, failing to keep in touch with the appointed teachers of the Gospel, fell into errors and were leading men astray. Speaking of these St. Peter says, among other things: "It had been better for them not to have known the way of justice, than after they had known it, to turn back from that holy

commandment which was delivered to them" (2 Pet. ii, 21). And St. John says of such teachers: "they went out from us but they were not of us." And turning to the faithful he says: "As for you, let that which you have heard from the beginning abide in you" (1 John ii, 19, 24). No more striking evidence of the necessity of receiving the teaching of the faith only from those whose capacity to teach it has been made secure by the extraordinary helps given to the Apostles and their successors in the Church.

But as in the first ages of the world, when people began to multiply and to spread out over the face of the earth, wandering away from the cradle of the race and the home of authentic tradition, they wandered too from the teachings originally delivered to the fathers: so even after the great revelation made by the Son of God, when time began to lessen the reverence due to His word, and men began to interpret its meaning by the feeble lights of their own judgment, neglecting or indifferent to the official teaching of the Church, they soon fell away into various erroneous opinions, making shipwreck of the faith. But just as the Jews, through God's special Providence, from the days of Abraham on to Moses, and from him again to the time of Christ, were kept in the true faith and worship in the midst of the surrounding Gentile world: so the Church, through the help given to it by its Founder, despite the heresies arising from age to age, will continue as it has continued during twenty centuries, to teach the Gospel truth, as it was delivered by its first authorized teachers —the Apostles. The promise of our Lord is guarantee for this, and the experience of two thousand years has

vindicated His promise. "Let no man deceive you with vain words, for because of these things cometh the anger of God upon the children of unbelief" (Ep. v), wrote St. Paul to the Ephesians. And St. John in his old age, when he had lived to see all his brethren in the apostolate seal their faith in the divinity and teaching of the Master with their blood, had to write his Gospel to correct the blasphemous doctrines that at that early day were already endeavouring to sap the foundations of Christianity by denying the divinity of Our Saviour. But these trials to the Faith were not without their uses. While they sifted the chaff from the wheat among the faithful, the doctrines of the Church came to be more explicitly defined and more exactly apprehended. For the Church, ever calm in the security of her divinely assured possession of revealed truth, and her divinely assured power of correct exposition of it, when one after another of her teachings was assailed, for the guidance of her children, but repeated with greater emphasis and in more explicit terms in the language of her Councils, what she had been teaching them already, and had been teaching from the first. And so when the great revolt of the sixteenth century came, after the many lesser heresies of the earlier ages, and perverse and corrupt men, on pretence of calling back the Church to the purity of primitive Christianity, denied almost every doctrine of her teaching, and swept whole nations from the Faith, and she like a ship in the tempest seemed threatened with destruction—rode securely through the storm. And though many a wreck floated upon the waters, and the foundations

of the ancient beliefs were uprooted amongst whole peoples, summoning her teachers, the successors of the Apostles, the Bishops of the day, and her learned men, to meet in Council at Trent, as the Apostles and Ancients assembled at Jerusalem "to consider of this matter" (Acts xv), she announced anew her time-honoured doctrines, and looked to the future with the confidence that comes of the sense of possession of the truth. And so while heresies and heretics rose up and passed away, and one error succeeded another, the Church of Christ stands where it stood from the first, witnessing to the ancient and unchanging beliefs and warning her children, as St. Peter and St. Paul warned them, to beware of heretics and to shun them: "A man that is a heretic, after the first and second admonition, avoid" (Titus iii). And what do all these revolts against now one, now another doctrine of the Church show? Is it not that revealed truth is above our understanding? Is it not that the human mind is not a safe guide in dealing with it? Is it not that we must look for some help more than human, viz., to the Church, which was authorized to teach it and in whose keeping it is made safe by the two-fold care of the Son of God and of the Holy Ghost?

And the identity of the Church's teaching from age to age, and the identity of the faith of the faithful through all the centuries, is evidence of revealed truth abiding in the Church. What St. John taught in his Gospel about the divinity of our Lord: "In the beginning was the Word . . . and the Word was God" (Ch. i); what the Church reaffirmed three hundred years afterwards at the Council of Nice; the

same is taught all over the Catholic Church in our time, and is believed by all the faithful, just as it was believed through all the intervening centuries. And the same is true of every article of the Catholic creed. On the other hand, outside the Church you have unceasing variation and no stability of doctrine. Beyond a vague belief in Christianity you have no definite faith even in the fundamental dogmas of the Christian revelation. But truth is neither vague nor variable—like God, its Author, it is ever the selfsame.

And when within the Church the echoes are felt of what on one subject or another, people are saying, that cannot well be reconciled with the ancient teachings of the Faith, the Sentinel on the Watch Tower, the successor of St. Peter, like St. Peter himself in his day, lifts up his guiding voice, steadying the minds of his children in their fidelity to the truth. This is what, just before our time, Pope Pius IX did when he published his famous syllabus of errors. This is what, in our day, Pius X did when he raised his voice against Modernism and condemned it. And when we see the Bishops of the world-wide empire of Christ—the Catholic Church—now one, now another, even from the most distant parts into which the Gospel seed has fallen, as well as from the ancient cathedral cities of Europe—specially chosen men though they are, and distinguished—treading in unbroken procession year by year the ways that lead to Rome to compare their teaching with that of the Head and Centre of the Church—the See of Peter—do we not see repeated in our day what St. Paul, great Apostle that he was, did in his? "After three years I went up to Jerusalem

to see Peter, and I tarried with him fifteen days" (Gal. i, 18). "Now after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem. . . . And I went up according to revelation and compared with them the Gospel which I preached among the Gentiles. . . . Lest perhaps I should run, or had run in vain" (Gal. ii, 1, 2). Thus the teaching and the practice of the teachers of the Church show us where the Gospel truth, on the faith of which salvation depends, is to be found; and with what jealous care it is guarded there. If men would find it and believe it, they must seek it where it is to be had, viz., in the Catholic Church.

Now the word of God which Christ committed to the Church is not a treasure-house of doctrine pertaining to the divinity and the higher mysteries of redemption only. As we see from the sermons of Our Lord in the Gospel and from all the Epistles, the whole field of moral action and conversation, and the aim and the practices of religion, come in for treatment also. And as the Church was not instituted as an academy to teach the truths of the faith for the enlightenment of the mind alone, but is the home of instruction on moral and religious questions as well, "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt. xxviii), her teaching is a light to our eyes, and a guide to our feet in paths where a less enlightened and reliable teacher cannot with safety conduct us. On the moral questions which so nearly concern our actions and conduct at so many points, and where so many important issues are so often at stake, we cannot be dependent on the varying and uncertain opinions of men whose judgment so widely

differs on most things. And we must not alone have a sure grasp of the principles that point out in a general way the course to pursue : we must know the right from the wrong as nearly as possible in every situation that arises, so that the moral law may not be infringed, and our conscience may be at rest. For these ends we must have recourse to the Church, to whom was entrusted the full Gospel message, in its moral as well as in its dogmatic side. Of Himself Our Lord said : " I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth in Me may not remain in darkness " (John xii, 46). The light which His teaching shed upon the world, clearing up what was in shadow and obscure, and bringing out into the noonday clearness of the Gospel, His Church keeps for ever shining for the guidance of every succeeding age, giving definite and undoubting certainty on the complex moral questions which face men in so many contingences. And we see this in the eagerness, for example, with which the utterances of His Vicar—the Sovereign Pontiff are canvassed, when in his official Epistles to the whole Church he deals with one or other of the larger questions that from time to time agitate men's minds. And a sense of relief comes over society when he draws attention to the principles underlying the situation, and points out the lines along which the solution of the complex issues is to be found. " *Roma loquuta est, causa finita est,*" said St. Augustine—" Rome has spoken, the question is at an end." The Encyclical Letters of Pope Leo XIII, in which he rather anticipated many of the social troubles which only threatened in his day but soon after convulsed society,

are referred to as all but documents of inspired wisdom, in which the Pontiff points out the remedies for many social evils, and calls attention to the great moral truths, which if respected in human intercourse will mitigate, if not obviate, many acute social troubles. His letters "On the Christian Constitution of States," "The Duties attaching to Civil Power," "On the Rights of Labour," "On the Sacredness of the Marriage Contract," "On the Home and the Family," are founts of light and guidance to which we can always turn with the sense that here is a reflection of the "Light that enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world." And how explain how the Pope speaks as no other man on earth speaks, and why do men hearken to his words, and why do his utterances command an attention that is extended to no one else? It is the spontaneous homage which men pay to the Vicar of Christ when he deals with the great questions that affect the welfare of society, which it is his special province to expound and explain. Nor does he speak alone. Under him and jointly with him is the whole Episcopate—heirs of the same Catholic Tradition as himself, charged with the same commission to teach it as he, and aided by the same Holy Spirit to expound with their Head and Chief the doctrine of the Church on the moral as well as the religious questions that arise. In the united teaching of that extraordinary body scattered over every land that constitutes the Episcopate of the Catholic Church with their Head and Chief the Pope, under the guiding influence of the Holy Spirit, you have the infallible truth of Faith.

On the other hand, that clear sense of right and wrong which instructed Catholics possess, and that idea of moral duty which is not inspired by fear of the law or of public opinion: that perception of the inevitable and invariable obligation of the moral law, which makes a man do the right thing because it is right, at any cost, and which is an elementary principle of Catholic teaching and conduct, is at once an evidence and an outcome of the teaching ever abiding with us, of Him who founded His Church to furnish it to the world. And whatever unbelieving men may say, whether in disparagement or in admiration of the Church's teachings, she will continue to teach, indifferent to criticism, whether friendly or hostile. She has the truth and she knows it. It is her privilege to teach it unerringly. If people would come to know it they must be taught it by her. "All things whatsoever I have heard of My Father, I have made known to you" (John xv,15). If men would share that knowledge they must be of the body among whom it is freely dispensed, and with whom it is common property, viz., the members of the Catholic Church.

Then our Lord intended His followers to form their lives on His teaching, and to show it forth in their conduct. They were to be the light of the world, and the salt of the earth. "So let your light shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in Heaven" (Matt. v, 16). Now without the assistance of the powerful aids with which the Church in endowed, this ideal is beyond the realization of men. To come to anything like what they are to aim at, they must come to the Church. She

can give the light to know what to do, and the power to carry out in practice what is to be done, so as to realize the standard which Christ laid down. And when we go back through the centuries, and see the lives of so many of every nation, and of every rank and condition, who did wonders in their day, and examine into the causes of their greatness and influence, we find it in the use they made of the helps they found ready to hand in the Catholic Church.

Finally, the necessity of participating in that worship of God which Our Saviour instituted and confided to His Church compels universal membership of it. We have but to go back to the Old Law to see how important a part in the service of God is the worship which He requires us to pay Him. The instincts of nature, which are so true in this respect, as we see in the ruined temples of the ancient world as well as in the rude attempts of the savage of the present day to worship the Supreme Being, have their ratification in the positive legislation of Moses, as in the institutions for religious worship established by Our Saviour. And as instructions in great detail were given in the Law of Moses, on the whole subject of public worship—the days to be kept sacred, the sacrifices to be offered, and the place where worship was to be conducted—nothing being left to the initiation of the people themselves, we are taught what a place in the Divine mind the proper worship to be offered to God occupies. Now Our Lord, who is Himself the fulfilment of the Law, before leaving the world did not leave this important part of the future service of the Creator unattended to. Hence before the Veil of the Temple was rent,

and sanctity had departed from the Holy of holies, as the Paschal Lamb was sacrificed for the last time, and the figures and types of the Old Dispensation were about to give place to the realities they foreshadowed, He instituted the Sacrifice by which God was henceforth to be worshipped. Taking in His hands the bread of the Passover, and the wine which was an accompaniment of the Festival, by His omnipotent word He changed them both into His Body and Blood, and ordered His Apostles to repeat the same sacrificial act in perpetual remembrance of Him. On the morrow His great Sacrifice was to be offered up on the cross for the redemption of mankind: on the evening before, He instituted the Sacrifice of the Mass to be a perpetual commemoration of it. Now when we consider the sacred character of this Sacrifice, and the purpose for which our Blessed Saviour instituted it, we can readily see that only where the Mass is to be had can man worship God as He desires: that is, in the Catholic Church. The presence of the faithful at the celebration of the Sacred Mysteries, from the first day of the Church, when they gathered around the Apostles for the " breaking of bread " (Acts ii), and the great concern of the Apostles themselves about the fitness of those on whom they were " to impose the hands of the priesthood " (Tim.), for the offering of this Sacrifice, are evidence of the mind of the Church as to what place the Mass holds in the system of worship introduced by her Founder. And when, soon after, public worship was impossible—in the days of persecution—and the faithful gathered around their bishops and clergy in the Catacombs, they did so to

assist in these subterranean galleries at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, as the pictures in these places which still survive attest. Here at home, the traditions have not quite died out, of the Catholic assemblies in secluded spots through the country, where under the shelter of some friendly tree or rock the rude altar was placed, and the priest celebrated Mass; the people kneeling on the green sward round about. On the other hand, the magnificence of the Basilicas and Cathedrals which during the ages, the Church has raised, and ever raises as soon as freedom of public worship is possible, shows her sense of the sacredness of her worship, and that to her mind all that is noble and inspiring in the arts, cannot be more appropriately employed than in the erection and decoration of her temples of worship. This undying Catholic sense is an enduring argument that the religion of Christ condemns the pretension that would claim adequate worship of God without the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. For worship, therefore, as for faith, all must belong to the Church.

We need not dwell on the special features of the Church or on the marks that distinguish the Church of Christ—the True Church—amidst the many religious institutions to be found among men. Following the sequence of events leading up to its foundation, and tracing out its origin and progress, we have seen that the Church was founded by Christ, on His Apostles; and that it grew up into being around them as they went abroad into the world preaching the Gospel. The Church of Christ then—that is, the True Church—traces its descent from the Apostles. Any more recent origin

is fatal to the claim of any Church. Next, the Church of Christ is the opposite of the Synagogue; the opposite of a National Church. It can admit neither limits of time nor place. Its boundaries must be ever extending. Just as it was incumbent on the Apostles to move on, "enlarging the place of their tents, stretching out the skins of their tabernacles" (Isaias lv), the boundaries of the Church must be ever widening, embracing new lands and new peoples. In short it must be Catholic, coming down from the days of the Apostles, and stretching out to all lands and peoples, fulfilling the Divine commission "to preach the Gospel to every creature". Then it is the Church of the One God, and the One Redeemer of all men, Our Lord Jesus Christ. And men being one family, the descendants of common parents, and now regenerated in the one Baptism, and gathered together into membership of the One Church by a common faith in the same doctrine, under the One Headship of the Pope, the Vicar or Representative of Christ on earth, the Church can be no other than One. Finally, the Church of Christ is Holy—founded by Him it could be nothing else. And furnished by Him with the instruments or means of holiness, viz., His Gospel, Sacraments, and Sacrifice, no wonder that numbers of her members through all the ages, have edified the world by the holiness of their lives. Now in the Catholic Church alone are all these things realized—all these marks are found only in the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church, therefore, is the True Church. Historically it has come down in unbroken continuity from the days of the Apostles. It is the One Church then founded by the Redeemer, to which for the true service of God in

life, and for eternal salvation afterwards, all must belong. The words of the Vatican Council come in here appositely to our purpose. "To the Catholic Church alone appertain all those many and wonderful things that are divinely disposed to make manifest the evident credibility of the Christian faith."

CHAPTER XVIII.

Sin and its Forgiveness.

Within her own sphere the Church, to which all are summoned, is endowed with plenary powers and sovereign authority. The words of Our Saviour, not once but on repeated occasions and in various forms, leave no room for doubt on this point. Hence, whether in teaching His doctrine or dispensing the fruits of redemption through the appointed channels, as in the government of the faithful, the Church has full and supreme authority. Absolutely autonomous within her own province, she is subject and responsible to her Founder alone. It is for her to define what His teaching is, and to lay down the conditions pertaining to divine worship. In the exercise of her appropriate functions He has guaranteed her His own assistance to keep and to guide her, not as and when it may be necessary, but always and on all occasions. The Spirit of God is ever within her, and the aid of her Founder is ever at

her side to direct and steady her in all her doings in the sublime office she is called to fill.

Yet St. Paul, speaking of himself and his fellow Apostles, claimed no initiative but only executive or administrative powers. "Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ and dispensers of the mysteries of God" (1 Cor. iv). For they were not the authors of the Gospel they preached, nor the source of the mysteries they dispensed. Again he says: "For Christ we are ambassadors" (2 Cor. v). If ambassadors they know the limit of their powers, and the extent of their commission. This is essential in the ambassadors of earthly princes. It is not wanting surely to the ambassadors of Christ. And we know otherwise that it is not wanting. And whatever may be true of the ambassadors of earthly princes in the case of men from whose authority nothing was exempted, who were plenipotentiaries in the fullest sense; whatever they put their hands to in their own sphere is within their competence, and whatever they claim as within their power they have a right to claim. Excess in their administration is antecedently impossible, both because they know no bounds within their sphere, and because of the divine assistance that is ever at their side to save them from excess.

Now, together with authority as well as capacity to preach the word of God as it was delivered to them to preach, and to decide all questions concerning it which the Church claims and exercises to-day as at all times in her past history, she claims also the right and power to forgive sins. And though this is a prerogative that naturally belongs to God—"Who can forgive sin but

God only" (Mark ii); "Forgiveness to the injured doth belong"—there is no doubt at all that Our Lord gave the power of forgiving sins to His Apostles, and through them to their successors in the Church. In the days of His mortal life whatever powers He gave them—to preach the Gospel, to cure diseases, to expel devils—the power to forgive sin was not amongst them. Not indeed that He might not have given them this power with the rest if He wished, but it would seem that He would not anticipate events. He had not yet become the Redeemer. He had not yet paid the price, and merited the grace by which sin is washed away. And though as God He might and did forgive sin Himself (Matt. ix, 2; Luke vii, 47; etc.), only when He had redeemed mankind and paid the price due for sin did He give His Apostles power to forgive sin in His name. This is brought out clearly in the sequence of events bearing on this important matter.

On the occasion of the Last Supper, He gave command to His Apostles to commemorate the wonderful doings at that supper-table; raising them to the Priesthood, and enabling them to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. On Easter Sunday evening when He appeared amongst them in the same supper-room, and when they could hardly believe their eyes that He was there in their midst again, having repeated the commission to preach the Gospel, breathing on them He said: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost, whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven them: and whose sins you shall retain they are retained" (John xx, 23). The solemnity of the occasion, the gravity and solemnity of the ceremony, and the time selected, all combine to show what power

He gave the Apostles when He addressed these pregnant words to them. They suggest at the same time the reason why He withheld this power when He raised them to the Priesthood a few days previously.

Sin, as is well known, is an offence to God. It is the one blot in His beautiful creation, and introduced into it by the deliberate act of man. To remove it, no less than to atone for it, was the purpose of the Incarnation: "I came not to call the just, but sinners to penance" (Luke iii, 32). "Jesus Christ came into this world to save sinners" (1 Tim. i). "How that Christ died for our sins." (1 Cor. xv). "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all" (Rom. viii). Now while by His passion and death Our Lord satisfied for our sins: "When we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son" (Rom. v, 10), to blot out the sins of those that had passed away, was no longer possible; but to blot out the sins of those who had not passed away and who were yet to come was quite possible. Hence He gave the power to forgive sin to His Apostles, i.e., the power to apply to present and future sinners the grace purchased by His sufferings for the cleansing of the sinner.

The idea of cleansing from sin was so familiar in the Old Dispensation to the people of God, and was so clearly foretold as an effect of the coming of the Redeemer, that no one acquainted with the Scriptures could doubt that Our Lord would make special provision for it in the religious system He would introduce. And indeed what advantage would men gain by the Redemption, if, when they fell into sin afterwards there was no provision for freeing them from it? And

surely the rites and sacrifices of the Old Law, which was altogether but a preparation for the better religion to come, were not to be more effective than the ministrations of the New Law for the remission of sin (Lev. v and vi, 10). And if the ministry of the priest was required in the past when sacrifice for sin was offered (Lev. v), was the priesthood of the New Law to be devoid of power and efficacy when sinners were to be cleansed from their sins? A fountain would be opened, the prophet Zachary tells us (Ch. xiii, 1), for the cleansing of the sinner. Is not the power of forgiving sins conferred on the Apostles on the day of the Resurrection that fountain? And if our Lord sent the man in the Gospel whom He cured of leprosy, the symbol of sin, to show himself to the priest (Matt. viii), would it not seem that the priesthood should never fail to hold its place in the process of freeing men from sin. And if He substituted His Apostles for Himself; and if as the Father sent Him, He in turn sent the Apostles (John xx), if they were to fill His place, however inadequately, they must have power to forgive sin as He forgave it. And as He conferred on them unlimited powers of binding and loosing, the power of loosing from sin is surely included in the general commission. Anyhow, the words of St. John above quoted, by which He gives the special power of forgiving sins, have settled the question, and teach us however God may act in His private dealings with human souls, in the matter of the forgiveness of sin, as in all other things relating to God's service, Our Lord has conferred on the ministers of His Church, as part of their equipment for their office, the power of forgiving sins. And the teaching of the Church,

and her practice during all the ages from the beginning, which is the certain interpretation of Our Saviour's words, declare to us His meaning when He said, addressing His Apostles: "Whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven them." Now this is expressly declared for us by the Council of Trent (Sess. xiv, Canon iii), which says: "If any one should say that those words of the Lord Our Saviour ("Receive ye the Holy Ghost, whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain they are retained") are not to be understood of the power of remitting and retaining sins in the Sacrament of Penance, as the Catholic Church understood from the beginning, let him be anathema." Whatever blot sin, then, is in the world, and whatever evil, it is not without a remedy while the pastors of the Church have power to forgive sin. What a wonderful provision this, and what a blessing!

What then is sin? In what does sin consist? Sin is any wilful thought, word, deed or omission contrary to the law of God. Anything forbidden by the divine law is sin; and we commit sin when we wilfully fail to do what the divine law commands, or when we deliberately do what it forbids. And we may sin by thought within the mind alone, as well as by word, or deed, or omission. But as sin is possible only in reference to what has been the subject matter of the law of God, outside of what the divine law deals with, we enjoy the untrammelled exercise of our free will. It is understood of course that we are bound too to obey the Church, but her laws are reducible to the law of God, with whose authority she enacts her precepts. It

is the same with all lawfully constituted authority. It may be asked why has God commanded certain things, and forbidden certain other things. Are His laws made merely as a test of our obedience, as in the case of our First Parents; or for some collateral purpose, as when laws are made for their subjects by public authority? Now the law of God has not originated in this way—is due to no such reason. What that law enforces upon mankind has been enforced already by the law of nature which makes known its wishes in the depths of every heart. Before the Decalogue was uttered on Mount Sinai and from the day that man came from the hand of His Creator, it was a necessary obligation, e.g., that men should pay Him homage, and that children should respect and obey their parents. Indeed the Ten Commandments, which comprise the law of God, made no new precepts; they but define more accurately and decree more definitely what our own sense and conscience notifies and compels. And hence, while God, when He gave the Ten Commandments added many precepts that have long since gone out of use, no change has ever come to suspend the Decalogue, or put its precepts in abeyance: "Do not think that I am come to destroy the law. . . I am not come to destroy but to fulfil" said our Saviour (Matt. v, 17). What it commands is unchangeably right: what it forbids is unchangeably wrong. Sin, then, or what is forbidden by the law of nature, is bad by nature, and is recognized as such by the common sense of men. The light of reason reveals and the judgment of conscience declares what is and what is not sin. Hence the gnawing at the heart, even in untutored

nature, and the self condemnation without excuse that follows when the voice of conscience goes unheeded, and one, weakly, yields to sin. And this rising up of self against ourselves is but nature's proclamation of the indefensibleness of sin and its incurable wickedness.

We sin by thought as by word or deed. Indeed the guilt of sin is already in the thought, whether expressed outwardly afterwards in word or deed. Though a word or deed that is sinful and attended by different consequences, is different from the mere thought of it, the harm is already in the malevolent mind, if the occasion for saying or doing the thing never came. Nor will a man hold himself guiltless who was ready to take another's life, or property, if the opportunity of doing so never offered. "Who looks on a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Matt. v, 28). So true is it, on the other hand, that the sin is mainly in the thought, that the word or deed in which it is expressed, no matter how bad or injurious to another, is quite sinless, if while unconscious of the harm it contained we spoke the evil word or did the evil deed. For the essence or malice of sin consists in doing the sinful thing when conscious that it is forbidden. As long as the thing is not presented to our mind as wrong, to do it, or say it, or think it, is quite harmless to the agent in each case; its malice, having escaped our thought, is not attributable to us. But as words and deeds are different both from the thoughts which they express and from each other—to do is different from to think, and to say is different from both —as there are sins of thought, so there are sins of word and sins of deed. The word is sinful that

is the expression of a sinful thought, and so with the deed as well.

And there are sins of omission. That is when we advert to a duty to be done and decline to do it, as when a man knows his debt to his neighbour and will not pay it. Nor is it the failure to pay in this case that is sinful. It may or it may not be so, according as it was or was not the result of a deliberate act of mind deciding not to pay after adverting to the duty of paying. In these four ways, and in these only is sin committed. From what has been explained it is clear that sin is chiefly in the act of the mind, and not in its outward expression, whether that is word or deed or omission. But because to say a bad word or do a bad deed is a different thing from thinking it, the distinction must be maintained of sins of thought, word, deed, and omission. On the other hand the mere thought or suggestion of evil is not sin. It is not sin as long as we do not make the thought our own by consenting to it, as long, in short, as it is not wilful when we become conscious of its wickedness. It is understood of course, that speculative thinking about a sinful matter with a view to understanding it, is not a sin ; practical thinking, i.e., thinking with a view to enjoy the thought, or with a view of doing the sinful thing the thought suggests, that is sinful.

Sins of all kinds differ in gravity, as in their consequent effect upon the soul. They are either venial or mortal, light or grievous. Mortal sin is so called because it kills the soul by depriving it, not indeed of its natural life, for the soul is immortal, but depriving it of its supernatural life, which consist in being in the grace of God. To fall into mortal sin is to fall from sanctifying grace

and the favour and friendship of God. It is to put out the light of heaven in the soul; and in the supernatural order to which grace raises us, it is to do what killing does in the order of nature. And as one dead cannot come to life again except by the power of God, so one dead to grace, and to the supernatural life to which grace raises us, cannot recover that life again except by the power and mercy of God. For so serious injury no light or trivial matter will suffice. In the case of mortal sin the matter of the sin is always serious. Besides, one must advert to the fact that it is so, and only when notwithstanding this advertence one deliberately consents, is the sin mortal. Three elements, therefore, combine in constituting mortal sin, first, the matter must be serious, as to steal say £10; second, one must advert to the fact that it is seriously wrong; and third, deliberate consent—and you have all the elements of grievous sin. On the other hand, when any one of these three constituent elements is wanting —as when the matter is only light, or the advertence is imperfect, or the consent but partial—the sin, instead of being mortal, is only venial, if there should be any guilt whatever. But when, though knowing well how grave the matter is, one casts all considerations to the winds, and for one's own interest or pleasure will not be restrained, the sin is mortal. And since one always knows such a thing is forbidden by the law of God—indeed to His law we owe our clearer knowledge of its sinfulness—in mortal sin there is ever the implied disregard of God's will, to follow our own desires. In mortal sin, therefore, we turn from God to do our own deliberate choice and will. In committing it we are

conscious of His prohibition and regardless of it, we indulge the pleasing passion heedless of results. But as the law of God is not a free enactment, but the necessary expression of what the nature of God requires —that divine nature which is at once the source of all things, and the final law of right and wrong—it is manifest God cannot help forbidding what is wrong or exacting reparation when it happens. We can see the evil effects of certain sins on ourselves and others. We know what drunkenness does to the drunkard, for example. But who can measure the outrage against God, when a responsible being like a man, while fully conscious of the nature of his act, yet places before God a deed which the divine nature from eternity had forbidden—decreed that it should not be. This innate opposition of grievous sin to the eternal law of right and wrong, and therefore to the eternal being of God, (for God's Eternal Law is God Himself) explains His opposition to it and the punishments with which from Creation onwards He has pursued, and cannot but pursue, the commission of grievous sin.

But God rejoices not in punishing, "His mercy is over all His works" (Ps.), and seeing that in sinning we know not what we do, and taking account of the power of passion over the weakened will of men, He is ever pleading with us, as a mother, to return to His friendship. "As I live, saith the Lord, I desire not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live" (Ezechiel xxxiii, 11). "All the day long have I spread my hands to a people that believeth not and contradicteth me" (Rom. x, 21). Indeed, there is nothing more touching in the long history of God's

dealings with men than the patient pleadings and manifold entreaties, the promises of blessings, and the pressing encouragements addressed with unwearying repetition to sinful men, to give up their evil ways and seek His pardon and friendship. Every page of the Bible bears witness to this. And when pleadings failed and chastisements fell upon stubborn necks, the words of the Prophets are still there to tell how these were the last and reluctant resort of the tenderest of fathers, to bring His children to repentance rather than see them perish in their sins. Then, to crown all, when the time had come He sent His Divine Son to die for our sins, while He in turn, of His own free will, made the supreme sacrifice for us: "No man taketh it away from Me, but I lay it down of Myself" (John x). In His day He associated in friendly intercourse with sinners in order to win them to repentance. "Why doth your Master eat with publicans and sinners?" (Matt. ix). The picture of the prodigal is from His lips (Luke xv). To Magdalen He gave undying celebrity. And if for the more plenteous out-pouring of the healing grace of absolution, as for other useful purposes, He sends us to His priests, the cry of the penitent and contrite heart is as welcome to His ears and as certain to be heard to-day as when it was the only medium of returning grace. Once our contrition is perfect, i.e., once we are sorry for our sins because of the offence they gave to God, and we repent of them for His sake rather than for our own, the most abandoned sinner returning in trustful sorrow to his Father's feet will not depart without the comfort of forgiveness (Luke xviii). And what is the forgiving

power of the priest but an extension of mercy to meet the but half repentant sinner, who often, from the fear of punishment or some other selfish motive, comes to be released from the oppressive burden of his sins. But if in spite of all, men prefer the ways of sin, and will not seek forgiveness, their end is perdition without hope. "Depart from Me you cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels," are the words that will ring for ever in the ears of the reprobate, reminding them of the hopelessness of their doom—such the end in which mortal sin terminates at last.

Venial sin is different from mortal sin in that it is not a grave sin. The name signifies pardon, a pardonable sin—pardonable because the matter of the sin is light—a petty theft, a hasty word, or something. done with only hurried and imperfect deliberation. Thoughts that are swift by nature, that are over before one is conscious of their presence and less conscious of their malice, whose objects are not clearly outlined to the mind in their sinful nature, fall easily into this class of sin. Sins of such kind as these, which are due to the weakness of fallen nature rather than to any real perversity, do not imply a deliberate turning away from God, nor a break in our relations with Him, nor the loss of grace. The just may fall into such faults seven times without ceasing to be just (Prov. xxiv, 16). Nor do they dispose the virtuous who are sorry for them to the loss of grace. If, however, venial sin becomes deliberate and causes no great concern, one may gradually fall into the disposition from which the step to grievous sin is easy.

As venial sin is easily committed it is easily remitted.

But as every sin is an offence to God and a violation of His law, an earnest repentance is ever necessary to remove it and free us from the effects it brings upon the soul. The ease with which venial sins may be committed, and the gradual dying out of a sense of sorrow for them that so easily supervenes on the habit of falling into them, show what care and circumspection we should use to guard against them. Among the many blessings we have, then, in the Church is a clear knowledge and sense of sin, through her teaching, and an unfailing and effective remedy for even the most grievous sins, in the forgiving power of the priesthood. To obtain forgivenesss, repentance is necessary now as ever. Nor does the absolution of the priest supersede atonement, or render it superfluous. But if adequate satisfaction for sin has not been made in life, the punishment of purgatory awaits us after death.

CHAPTER XIX.

Sin and its Punishments.

Purgatory.

The doctrine of punishment for sin requires but little explanation. The common sense of men accepts punishment as the just retribution for wrong doing.

Penal laws are a necessary part of the machinery for government in every state. In the home itself the instincts of the parent compel the chastisement of the child who wilfully disobeys. Nor is punishment given as a satisfaction to wounded feelings when authority is disregarded. It is given rather to restore the balance that has been disturbed in the indulgence of unrestrained desires. And whether this unreasonable indulgence implies an infringment of the laws of right and wrong only, as when one injures no one but oneself, or includes besides the trespass on the rights of other people, what other way remains to make up for the unwarranted excess except by punishing the author of it? And when we look into our own hearts, and listen to the pleadings of the spirit within us, do we not feel that the remorse that so quickly follows on excess will not be appeased without a penance to expiate our guilt. "In what day soever thou shalt eat thereof thou shalt die the death," threatened the Creator before the Fall. And though repentance followed on the Fall, and God's friendship and favour returned in answer to repentance, all did not do to ward off the punishment which had to come to repair the injury of transgression, and smooth again the situation sin disturbed. God will have right and justice in the world He made. The uncreated law of right, which is itself the nature of the Creator, compels it and it must be. If His creatures, then, knowingly break in on His arrangements, upsetting what in goodness He laid down, they do it to their cost; and the satisfaction of wilful self-indulgence will be redeemed only by equivalent punishment. "According to the

measure of the sin will the measure of the stripes be " (Deut. xxv).

Now the one thing remarkable about this punishment is its magnitude. We have seen what grievous punishment befell the first man and woman for their one sin of disobedience. Their condition was changed from a life of happiness and ease to one of ceaseless labour and care. Their very nature underwent a change. And we have seen that the Son of God Himself had to be offered up in sacrifice to save us from the still more dreadful punishments yet to come, which their sin and ours deserved. Only when we think of the Son of God nailed to the cross, and His life ebbing away, as the last drops of blood trickled down His cold and torn body, can we get an idea of what punishment is required to atone to God for sin. The infinite majesty of God is offended by it. " He who calleth those things that are not as those that are " is set aside by the sinner (Rom. iv). Against Him and His Eternal law the man turns back and rises in revolt who will not deny himself the forbidden satisfaction involved in sin. But God cannot allow Himself to be set aside in His own creation, nor suffer to be introduced into it without due compensation what the Eternal Laws on which Creation rests forbid. It could never be that one who owes his whole being to God could turn back on Him with impunity and treat Him with disregard, not to say contempt. If he chooses to stand out against Him and ignore His laws, his temerity will not, nor can it go unpunished, if right will be maintained and justice withheld. Nor indeed is it a matter of right and justice properly so called,

at all. For right and justice hold only where there is mutual independence. But there is no independence where it is the infinite Creator who commands, and a creature of His who refuses to obey. And though the thought is terrible, the word of God is pledged to it, that the final punishment of sin unsatisfied is the dread punishment of fire. The devils were punished with fire in answer to their revolt. And Our Lord expressly says that the reprobate will share their torments for eternity: "Depart from Me you cursed into everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. xxv). And if the balance is not restored before the repentant sinner leaves the world, the teaching of the Church is, that in the expiatory fires of purgatory he will pay to the last farthing what he yet owes to the Divine Justice for his sins. "If anyone should say that after the grace of justification is received no temporal punishment remains to be suffered either in this world, or in purgatory in the next, let him be anathema." (*Council of Trent*, Sess. vi, can. xx).

The teaching of the Church in this particular, and the whole doctrine of purgatory, brings out clearly what has to be considered in reference to sin and its forgiveness. The nature of sin is that it is a conscious violation of the law of God, in which the honour due to Him is denied to Him for the satisfaction of one's own self-will. In grievous sin this involves the loss of sanctifying grace to the guilty soul, and the loss of every blessed gift that came with grace. Now when in God's mercy the sinner comes to see his fault and repents, if he is sorry on account of having offended

God he recovers at once God's friendship and grace. But the recovery of God's friendship on so easy terms bespeaks only God's love and mercy and "His willingness to forgive." It does not imply that the dishonour done Him by the sin has been repaired by this passing act of sorrow. Rather, as when one does a wrong to a friend that involves injury to his property or his name, the forgiveness of the injury on evidence of the regret of the culprit, if it restores the broken friendship does not repair his damaged property or his injured reputation. The righting of these injuries must come from other sources, and is due to other deeds. So when we regain God's friendship by contrition and repentance it may well be that much may yet remain to be adjusted and set right, and this can now be done only by suffering and penance. The warning of the Holy Ghost (Wisd.) "not to be without concern for forgiven sins," points in this direction, and the teaching and examples of Scripture history convey the same lesson. The punishments of our First Parents, which a life-long repentance could not obviate, show us this; and the same is confirmed in the case of Moses, who for all his unrivalled power and influence with God could not undo the decree that barred his entrance to the Promised Land (Deut. xxxii). And the Royal Prophet, the model of repentant sinners, even when assured that his sin was pardoned had yet to bear penalties in atonement for it (2 Kings xii; xvi). If, however, as in these cases, we accept the ills of life as deserved punishment for our sins, they become atonement for them, and an occasion besides of much grace in this life and of meriting a high place with

God in the life to come (*Council of Trent*, Sess. xiv, can. ix). But if because of the remissness of our sorrow or the general indifference of our life, or the multiplication perhaps of sins up to the approach of death, though the guilt of these may have been removed by the Sacrament of Penance in the end, a debt of punishment yet remains; this when not discharged in life must be paid for after death. And the payment must now be made in the fire of purgatory. This need of expiation for forgiven sins, if necessary in life, is much more necessary after death, and is quite in keeping with our sense of the fitness of things.

The final destiny of every soul that leaves this life in the grace and favour of God is to join the company of the angels and saints in His presence in heaven. Now, there is no presence so glorious, and there is no company so select as this. By rare merit in well-doing, and the continuous practice of virtuous deeds to their last hour, did the saints deserve the happy state that awaited them at death. Surely, there is no likelihood that a life more marked by failings than by virtue, even though sanctified by the graces of the Sacraments, and ending happily at last with the consolations of the Church, will receive instant admission into the company of these. And if the sense of ordinary Christians would forbid such instant companionship, is not this much more true of the many whose lives were far less circumspect, and more empty of virtuous deeds. "We fools esteemed their lives madness, and their end without honour; behold how they are numbered among the children of God, and their lot is among the saints" (Wisd. v), was not said of the departed whose lives were

well enough marked by failings, and who in truth and honesty would make no claim to virtues they little practised or possessed. What our own sense thus readily admits, the Church has always taught, and has always acted on that teaching. The Fathers, as St. Augustine and St. Jerome, speak her mind to us in this matter; and St. Augustine writing on "the care of the dead," urges prayers and penances for their relief. And the common teaching of the Church as we find it in St. Augustine, St. Gregory, St. Thomas, and others, is that the sufferings of the life to come in punishment for sin surpass incomparably the sufferings of the present life. And though it is not expressly stated that the instrument of punishment after death is material fire, purgatory, or the place or state of expiation where imperfect souls are purged of their defects, and fitted for admission to the company of the elect, is always spoken of as a place of fire.

Then, as merit belongs to our time of trial and free service here "when we could transgress and did not," the disposition of the suffering souls contributes nothing either to reduce the term of their sufferings or the intensity of their pains. But however severe their punishment, there is over it all the comforting assurance that deliverance will some day come and that eternal and unfailing happiness awaits them. And though the time to help themselves is gone for ever, we are free to give them the charity of our suffrages and the assistance of our prayers. In going away from this life they ceased not to be members of the Church. They but passed from one stage to another of that wonderful organization, one branch of which is in eternity, the

other in time. And as the head over all the Church whether in time or eternity, embraces under His benign rule all its members, and secures to all the free interchange of kindly offices among themselves, we can help the souls in purgatory as they in turn can assist us. And as we may pray to our Father in heaven and to His saints for our friends on earth, so too can we pray for those who, though gone from this world, have not ceased to be children of the same family as ourselves, under the one Father, Our Lord Jesus Christ. From the earliest times Mass, the great means of impetration, was offered to God for the relief of the suffering souls. St. Gregory, and Venerable Bede tell us how they celebrated many Masses for their departed friends. St. Monica, on her death-bed, though a saint, besought her friends, her son St. Augustine among them, "to remember her at the Altar of the Lord." The form of ordination in use in the Church to this day declares that power is given to the new-ordained priest to offer Mass for the dead as well as for the living; and the Council of Trent (Sess. xxv) declares that according to the constant teaching of the Church the souls in purgatory are assisted by the prayers of the Faithful, but especially by the Holy Sacrifice of the Altar."

The practice of offering sacrifice for the souls of the departed obtained among the Jews, as we learn from the Second Book of the Machabees; and, as if a remnant of a primitive tradition, survives even among many Pagan people. And though one may not expect outside the Church accuracy of thought as to the needs of the departed, and the possibility of helping them, the prevalence of such practices is evidence of an ancient

and wide-spread tradition that the dead are benefited by the suffrages of their surviving friends. It was a custom among the Jews to pray also for the dead. And as if to hand down to the New a practice which was sacred in the Old Dispensation, we read in the Book of the Machabees above quoted (Ch. xii), i.e., in the last Book of the Old Testament: "It is a holy and a wholesome thought to pray for the dead that they may be loosed from their sins." There are prayers specially prepared for the use of the faithful, for the benefit of the souls departed. And at the end of all or almost all the public offices of the Church, the priest prays in her name for peace and rest for all who, having died in God's favour, may yet require relief. Most of the prayers in common use among the faithful have indulgences attached which are made applicable to the souls in purgatory, and all or almost all Plenary Indulgences are similarly applicable. To succour by prayers and sacrifice her departed children is an unceasing practice with the Church, and in every way possible she exhorts and encourages us also to help them. And as the man in torments mentioned in the Gospel (Luke xvi) pleaded with Abraham for his surviving brothers lest they should share his fate after death, so we may assume that the souls in purgatory plead earnestly for the Faithful on earth, and especially for their friends, that their experience in the future life may be better than their own. And as God rejoices not in the suffering of any of His creatures, "For He hateth none of the things He made" (Ps.), His one desire in reference to these suffering souls, who are one with Him in grace and charity, and destined to share His happiness for

eternity, is to see the day when all justice being fulfilled, they may be admitted to the company of the elect. And what is the solicitude of the Church and her ceaseless prayers and exhortations to the faithful to assist them, but the evidence of God's earnest will in their regard. Nor is there in the wide range of Christian charity a higher service than to help to hasten, by no matter how short a period, the transfer of these souls from such depths of suffering to such heights of happiness.

The doctrine and practice of the Church in reference to purgatory is summed up in the decree of the Council of Trent (Sess. xxv), which we here append: "It is the teaching of the Catholic Church, inspired by the Holy Ghost, taken from the Sacred Scriptures and the ancient traditions of the Fathers, and taught in her Sacred Councils, and more recently taught in this Œcumenical Synod, that purgatory is there; and that the souls there detained are assisted by the suffrages of the Faithful, and especially by the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass."

CHAPTER XX.

Grace.

In the last chapter we said grievous sin kills the soul by depriving it of sanctifying grace. This follows as the immediate consequence and effect of sin. What is grace? Grace is a supernatural gift added to

nature, that enables us to live a supernatural life and to merit a supernatural reward. To understand this somewhat, it is well to recall that God, when He first created man bestowed on him not alone such endowments as are natural to him, but others that are altogether above nature, and consequently to which he had no claim. To each of the elements in us He gave special and appropriate gifts ; to the soul, among other things, a faculty of apprehension that was singularly great ; to the body an immunity from the incidents and accidents of life ; while by other special gifts He so harmonized the relations and interactions of both parts that in the first man, Adam, though composed of two opposite elements, spirit and matter, all was harmony, composure, and peace.

But though such perfection of the individual was above the claims of nature, and was given simply to make life more happy, it did not raise Adam above the order of nature, nor impart to his service of his Creator anything above a natural value. Now God was not content with this. He would confer on him a higher perfection still, He would add another gift, and this now above the order of nature altogether—a supernatural gift which would raise man to the supernatural state, and enable him to render a supernatural service. This is the gift of grace—a free gift, indeed, above the claims of nature, from the bounteous hand of God ! This gift of grace raised Adam to the supernatural order, enabled him to live a supernatural life, and to merit a corresponding supernatural reward. And somewhat as the wire charged with electricity can produce effects above the native power of wire, and a wire so charged

is called a live wire ; or as a man endowed with knowledge can in virtue of his knowledge attempt what an uneducated man cannot ; or as Our Divine Lord as man, in virtue of the divinity in Him could do divine things, and His life was a divine life—so man by grace is raised above his natural condition to the supernatural state, and by good works can merit in that state a supernatural reward. Now in this state of grace both men and angels were created in the beginning. And just as animate nature is above inanimate, so is the supernatural state of grace above the state of nature. More, therefore, than youth and beauty to the cheek, and the flush and power of health to shapely manhood, is sanctifying grace to the soul. It is not a natural, but a supernatural quality added to us. Clothed in grace, God sees in us His own perfections mirrored as nature cannot reflect them, and He loves us for the living image of Himself grace brings out so well. A virtue, a power, a splendour, above nature, are conferred by grace ; and our life and actions while human and natural because the life and actions of men, are supernaturalized by grace and possess a supernatural value and efficacy. Though our life is on the earth and we are so much and so often the victims of its trials and sorrows, by grace it is touched with a light that is not of this world, which indeed is not always imperceptible.

Now from this supernatural state to which God had raised them, our First Parents fell when the trial came. For though grace was added to nature it remained ever separable from it, while its continued possession was to be at once the proof and reward of

faithful service: "For in what day soever thou shalt eat of it thou shalt die the death" (Gen. ii, 17). With the loss of grace went also the other more than natural gifts which were given in the beginning, and when these were lost the bond that bound our lower appetites to the ruling of the will was definitely sundered. The passions, now released, became more difficult to control, while their clouding influence reacted on the mind, whose perceptive powers were notably diminished. To the original integrity and perfection in which man was first created succeeded the ruin of our fallen state, while his duty to His Creator at the same time remained what it had been, or but little changed.

Now, it is in such circumstances as these the goodness of God and His mercy to us becomes more than ever manifest. Though the ruin of man, His masterpiece in the visible world, was great, and the wrong done in bringing this about was grievous, and to satisfy every injured interest difficult, and to man himself impossible—God would find a way of reparation, and would restore grace anew, and with it every hope of regaining our lost inheritance. And though for all this the Mystery of the Incarnation was necessary, and the suffering and humiliation consequent on it inevitable to raise us again to the state from which we had fallen, the Son of God would undertake it all, in order to restore to us again the supernatural life of grace, and the hope of the supernatural reward of heaven. In the grace thus secured for us we would find a sufficient counterpoise to the unruly strivings of our passions; while the effort to control these, and the

practice of a life of virtue, now under greater difficulties, would endear us more that ever to our Creator, and secure for us a higher and more glorious heaven.

Now the scheme of the Incarnation thus made necessary by the Fall has this among other useful consequences: that the supernatural order of grace, because of the external forms or symbols in which it finds expression, is brought out to observation like the order of nature, and its facts and history synchronize and fit in with the ordinary events of human history. Hence, the Fall and the promise of the Redeemer in consequence of it; the predictions of the prophets and the prophets themselves; the Scriptural teachings, and the institutions of the Old Law, that prepared men for the coming of the Saviour; and His life and death —while all of the supernatural order and designed for a supernatural purpose, are historic things no less than the ordinary events of history. And the founding of the Church, and its work and mission in the world, are of the same order of grace, and their aim and purpose is man's supernatural life and destiny. By means of the Church, her institutions, her preaching, and her Sacraments, the grace of Redemption is conveyed to men again, and we are raised to and sustained in the supernatural life, with its blessings, its influences, and its hopes.

The source of grace, then, to the world redeemed is our Lord Jesus Christ, who came to us by the Incarnation: "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John i, 17). And as the first man was raised to the supernatural state by grace, so each man now, as grace is given him through the appointed channels in the

Church, is raised to and sustained in the supernatural state and life. And as sin in the beginning destroyed the supernatural life in the first man, depriving him of grace, so sin now, in every man that sins, destroys the supernatural in him by the loss of grace. " By every mortal sin sanctifying grace is lost " (*Council of Trent*, Sess. vi). But because we have had a plenteous redemption, for God is our Redeemer, even though we fall we may rise again, for He has seen to it " that where sin abounded grace may more abound " (Rom. v). And here we come to see the two-fold office or function of grace, or rather, the two separate kinds of grace that are recognized by the Church, viz., actual grace, as it is called, and sanctifying grace. Actual grace, falling on the faculties of the soul and mind and will, moves them to their appropriate acts: to see, namely, what to do to recover grace again or advance in it, and seeing it to enable us to do it; and sanctifying grace which comes as the answer to, and the reward of these foregoing preparatory acts which arise in us from the promptings of actual grace. It is this sanctifying grace that, remaining in the soul, imparts to it the supernatural life, makes us pleasing in God's sight, and capable of meriting our supernatural destiny.

The agencies through which actual grace comes to us are manifold : " The Spirit breatheth where He will " (John iii), but the ordinary organ of grace is the word of God in the lips of the ministers of the Church, and the multiform means by which she can reach and touch the hearts of men. For the Church is the organ, as well as the repository of grace. But God, in His dealings with us and in His desire to call us to

His friendship, does not confine Himself to any special agency, not even to the Church. He acts immediately on the soul by His inspiration and His lights ; and these lights and inspirations are themselves but forms of actual grace. And just as the agencies of natural life in its many forms are abroad and at work unceasingly in nature, so the Holy Spirit, who came on purpose to give effect to the merits of the Incarnation, is ever breathing the germs of the supernatural life upon the ever wakeful minds of men. And whether He avails of one or another of the ordinary ways of human intercourse as the vehicle of His higher inspirations; or works through the Church, as He assuredly does most commonly in the case of the faithful; or acts immediately on the soul—He is ever busy awakening men to the supernatural, even though they so often remain unheeding and unmoved. But whether we listen or refuse to listen, it is certain that without the help of actual grace suggesting what to do and enabling us to do it, we can do nothing to rise to the level of the supernatural, or when there, to perform the acts proper to that state, " not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves, but that our sufficiency is from God " (2 Cor. iii, 5). But when touched by the light and influences and winning impulses of actual grace—for under these forms it comes to us—we turn to God, following the light that leads to virtue and well doing. The action of grace on the soul, then, smoothing difficulties, and imparting courage and resolution, is that wonderful influence that raises a man above earthly considerations and the dictates of worldly prudence, and makes him feel that to serve

God and obtain His favour are above all price, and to be secured at any sacrifice. Thus it is the promptings of actual grace, not resisted but obeyed, that lead men to recognize the Church, and enable them, often even at great sacrifice, to enter it. For grace is a light to the mind and a strength to the will, and a help to those good works which make the lives of all who value grace so different from the lives of others. Through grace the first followers of Our Lord came to recognize and believe in Him. Through grace St. Paul was changed from a persecutor to a convert and then to an Apostle. Thus it has been with converts ever since his day, and ever will be to the end. "If any one should say that a man can be made just in the sight of God by works done by the unaided powers of nature without the help of divine grace through Jesus Christ, let him be anathema" (*Council of Trent*, Sess. vi.)

To actual grace are due the works of penance men perform to expiate their sins, and the exercises of active piety so familiar to the faithful are all the outcome of actual grace working in their minds and hearts. So that the holiness of the saint and the reformation of the sinner are both alike the fruits of the self-same influence —an influence which, through the untiring and ubiquitous working of the Holy Spirit, is ever renewing the face of the earth with the marvels of conversion and holiness.

Actual grace, then, is a passing influence of a supernatural kind, conveyed to us with or without a natural medium as the Holy Spirit pleases, from whom it comes. By actual grace the ordinary actions of life are raised

to the supernatural order, undergoing a transformation, or receiving an influence that indeed is not apparent on the surface, though none the less real on that account.

And just as the motive that inspires an action makes no difference on the surface, so when our purpose is not human but divine—the honour of God, or something supernatural—the outward form of our action is in nothing altered, even though the whole act is supernaturalized by grace. "The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation" (Luke. xiii, 20). And this is one of the marvellous effects of grace: that by means of it, not alone what is good and holy of its nature, but the ordinary actions of our common life when inspired by a supernatural motive under the influence of grace, and carried out for a spiritual purpose, while losing nothing of their natural character and efficacy, take on a supernatural character and acquire a supernatural efficacy as well. Hence, said St. Paul: "whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do, do all for the glory of God" (1 Cor. x, 31). And just as the landscape with the evening sun athwart it has a beauty and a value for the heavenly light cast over it, so our ordinary deeds with the light of grace that comes from Him who is "the splendour of the glory of the Father" (Heb.) upon them, acquire a worth that is not of nature but of grace, not of earth but of heaven.

The result of actual grace duly corresponded to is that more grace is given to us: "*Pro gratia dat gratiam.*" Not, indeed, that grace produces grace, but that God gives it to us as a return or a reward, according to our merit and capacity. Just as the servant, when his task is done, receives his wages from his master, so we,

who become God's servants by grace, receive from Him in return for faithful service further helps of grace. And whether it is one coming to conversion either in faith or virtue from a life devoid of these, the rule is slow and not always steady progress in goodness rather than sudden or hurried change. And as the master in the Gospel (Matt. xxv, 15) gave five, or three, or only one talent to his servants, according to the capacity of each, so in the distribution of His grace God gives it to us in more or less abundance according to our capacity to receive it. And hence, as a result of our fidelity to actual grace already given us, and the progress we have made with what we have received, either further actual graces are given to help us on our way, or we receive the better gift of sanctifying grace.

What is sanctifying grace? As the word suggests, it is the grace that sanctifies the soul and makes us holy. The effect of sanctifying grace is not to stimulate to action as actual grace does, but to induce the state or quality of holiness on the soul that receives it. As knowledge enlightens the mind and virtue inclines the will to what is good, grace sanctifies the soul to which it comes. And it sanctifies the whole soul with its faculties and powers, raising us to the supernatural state. Grace being wholly supernatural, nature has no longing for it. The mere natural man feels neither a want of it when absent, nor is he conscious of its presence when it is given to him. It is a supernatural gift which God wishes to superadd to nature, and to make it available for us He would be hindered by no difficulties. To bring this grace within our reach was the end and pur-

pose of Redemption, though not the only end; while religion with its appliances, observances, and practices, is designed for the purpose of conferring it upon us.

Sanctifying grace in the soul is a condition precedent to merit. Without this grace there is no everlasting reward. For to be devoid of sanctifying grace is to be dead to the supernatural life, and incapable of merit. The purpose of the Holy Spirit speaking in the secret of every heart, enlightening every mind, and encouraging every will to every act of virtue is to bring sanctifying grace to the soul, or to increase it if already there. The measure of its worth is the price that was paid for it. It is God's greatest gift in this world, for by means of it we become in some measure participators in the Divine Nature Itself (2 Pet. i, 4). By sanctifying grace the fancy of the poet is realized when he said: "For we are also His (God's) offspring" (Acts xvii, 28), because by means of it we become the adopted sons of God, "And if sons, heirs also; heirs indeed of God, and joint heirs with Christ" (Rom. viii, 17). By sanctifying grace we are "made conformable to the image of His Son, that He might be the first born amongst many brethren" (Rom. viii, 29). From language such as this, which is indeed the language of the Holy Ghost, we can imagine what a transformation grace makes in the soul, and how it raises us far above the level of nature to something almost divine. It is the wedding garment of the Gospel, without which no one is admitted to the marriage feast (Matt. xxii, 12), but clothed with which, God looks upon us as His friends and the objects of His special love. The imagery of the Scriptures in the transports of the prophets are but the feeble attempts of men to describe in

human language the beauty of a soul in Sanctifying Grace (Cant. and Ps.). The efforts of Our Saviour's life, in preaching, in penance and prayer; the sufferings of His Passion; and the institution of His Church with its perfect organization, wonderful equipment, and untiring and manifold energy—have this sole end and purpose: to bring sanctifying grace to the souls of men. And whether her ministers attend at the cradle of the infant or the bedside of the dying, as at one or other of the leading junctures in man's life, their presence is for one purpose only—to administer those rites which Christ has ordained for imparting sanctifying grace to the Christian soul. Though sanctifying grace does not stifle passion it is a counterpoise against it; and to grow in grace by the practice of virtue and holy living is to make the conquest of our passions easy. Every act of religion or virtue of a soul sanctified by grace brings the instant reward of an increase of grace, and with every increase of grace there is a corresponding growth in merit and favour before God. (*Council of Trent*, on Justification. Canon xxiv). The holiness of the saints and their influence with God were the outcome of their growth in sanctifying grace. The Catholic Church is the nursing mother of saints, because the founts of grace are in her keeping. And the conversion of men from a life of sin to a life of virtue is a constant experience in the Church, because the sources of grace are in her hands.

Grace then gives a new life to the soul, and endows our actions with an efficacy that stretches out beyond the range of sense, and a value that is not measured by earthly standards. It enables us to look beyond the present life and to estimate the worth of things in

relation to the future, as well and as much as in relation to the present. It brings light to the soul, pointing to future happiness when misfortune would cloud the outlook, and it transforms the stolid dejection of the unbeliever into the hopeful resignation of the Christian. To fall from grace is to fall to a lower world, to forfeit the intimate association with God which friendship with Him implies, and to miss the blessings that freely circulate in the elevated world that is warmed by the sunshine of His love. To live in grace is to live in an anticipated heaven, and what it enables men to do and dare is exemplified in the many-sided heroisms of the saints. That extraordinary class of men and women, who from the beginning of the Church to this hour in plenteous numbers have never failed to edify the world by their holy lives, teach us what grace is and does in the souls of men. How many, like St Paul, were ready to be anathema for their brethren (Rom. ix, 3), having forsaken lives of ease and of honourable ambition, and embraced the labour and sacrifice inseparable from the life of the missioner! How many of the high-born have stepped down from their rank, and clothing themselves in the garb of the religious, devoted their lives to the obscure if useful monotony of the cloister! How many amid the distracting occupations of home life serve God in piety and simplicity of heart, taking trials and sorrows as they visit them as coming from His fatherly Providence, and bless Him for these favours! How many have turned from erring ways, and bewailing like David the sins of their early years, expiated in penance their offences against God! These, and such as these, show us the marvellous effects of grace in certain

remarkable classes of men. But these are hardly more wonderful than the hidden and silent transformations grace is hourly working unobserved, as it is changing old and young, men and women, to a higher and ever higher appreciation of the supernatural, and to the love and service of God above all else in life.

Now, if there is one thing under heaven or above it that is certain, it is this, that the unalterable desire of God is that our souls should be ever radiant with the splendours of His grace, and whether in life or death that we should appear before Him clothed, not with nature's beauty only, but with the incomparably higher beauty of grace. For this He became man. For this He died on the cross. For this He founded and endowed His Church. For this He sent the Holy Spirit. For this He pledged His own unfailing help to the end of time.

And the undying vitality of His Church—a miracle itself among the associations of men—is sustained, so that every age and every generation of men should have ever at hand the means of grace and sanctification. On the other hand, to deprive a soul of grace is to deal death to it, and to frustrate in regard to it the scheme and purpose of Redemption. No more criminal act can the mind of man conceive.

CHAPTER XXI.

The Ten Commandments.

Once the justice of God is satisfied either by the sufferings of purgatory or the penances and satisfactions voluntarily undergone in this life, there is no hindrance to the admission of the departed soul to the bliss of heaven. Just as the child who never stained his baptismal innocence, or the saint who by heroic service of God during many years finds death the doorway to everlasting life, so the soul purified in the chastening fires of purgatory is admitted to the place in the kingdom of the blessed which its merits and good works deserved. And it is God's will that this should be the end of all men, "for God will have all men to be saved" (1 Tim. ii, 4). But "many love darkness rather than the light, for their works are evil" (John iii, 19), and fail to reach the end intended for them. The question then for every one is, "What shall I do that I may have life everlasting?" as the young man in the Gospel put one day to Our Saviour. He answering him, said: "If thou wilt enter into life keep the Commandments." And when the young man further inquired what commandments, Our Lord replied: "Thou shalt do no murder," "Thou shalt not steal," etc. (Matt. xix, 16-20).

We have it, then, on the word of Our Blessed Saviour that we come to eternal life by way of the observance of the Ten Commandments. And indeed, as we shall see presently, the Ten Commandments embrace the full round of Christian duty. They are called the Command-

ments of God, and they disclose their origin in that they embrace the whole range of Christian duty in a few simple yet comprehensive sentences. For these reasons there is nothing that men should hold in such respect and reverence as these rules of conduct, this code of laws. There is nothing of a like nature to compare with them in any way, and they have much to recommend them to us besides. They were old when Christianity was first preached in Judea; and the demands they make on us find an echo in every heart. They were first proclaimed under circumstances worthy of their importance and of the world-wide and lasting sway they were destined to exercise over men. And God, not man, is their Author (Exod. xx). From the day they were given to Moses to deliver to the Hebrew people, changes without number have passed over the face of the world, and nations and races have come and passed away. Many laws that were published with them at the time have long since gone out of use. But the Ten Commandments are the self-same, unchanged in their claim upon our allegiance, and inexorable in the urgency of their claim. They are as unchanging as the human nature they suit so well, and they touch it at its source and in its most vital relations. Hence, in the future course of centuries they will challenge and arrest the attention of the coming generations as they have done in the past, and they, as those that have gone, will bow down before them and acknowledge the reasonableness of the demands made by the Commandments, and the duty of complying with them. As no one is above his nature, but subject to it, all must inevitably submit to the prescriptions of a code that seems to rise out of the

constitution of our nature itself rather than from any outside source whatsoever. God indeed is the Author of the Commandments as to the form in which they are known to us. In publishing them He but added the weight and the sanction of His authority and the light of a more explicit enunciation to what nature itself ever exacted, and exacts from us as a manifest duty. As the law of God, therefore, pointing out and enforcing on us certain rules of conduct, the propriety and urgency of which all must admit, nothing can be more sacred with us. And as on the observance of this law follows as a consequence the favour and friendship of God in this life and the enjoyment of a blissful immortality in the world to come, there is no doubt that it is at once our duty and our interest to give to these Commandments the most loyal and unfaltering obedience. Nor is there anything so becoming our intellectual and moral nature, nor so calculated to enhance the worth of both, as to act when one or other of these Commandments applies, exactly as it defines and prescribes our duty. And when God in such circumstances commands what to do, indifference or disobedience to His will is at once a discreditable and criminal abuse of liberty. It is no credit, then, to anyone to disobey the law of God. To do so is a crime against nature and the Author of nature. The censure one passes on oneself, when there is no one to accuse but our own conscience, is proof of this ; while the remorse that follows is the avenging of injured nature for the irregular indulgence of our self-will. On the other hand, there is no satisfaction so genuine and heartening as the approval which conscience, speaking from the depths of nature, utters when one has been careful

to obey. And "the peace of God which surpasseth all understanding" (Phil. iv, 7) is the abiding reward of the habitual observance of these Commandments.

They were given to Moses on Mount Sinai as the basis of the future relations of the Jews with God, as His special people. The promise of the blessings of temporal prosperity and peace which He then made to them was conditional on the faithful observance of these Commandments. The promise of prosperity and peace and happiness, if they kept the Commandments, constituted in fact His covenant with them: "You shall walk in the way that the Lord your God hath commanded you, that you may live, and it may be well with you, and your days may be long in the land of your possession" (Deut. v, 33). Failing their observance of the Commandments He warned them what calamities would befall them: "And the nations shall say: why hath the Lord done thus to this land. And they shall answer: Because they forsook the covenant of the Lord, which He made with their fathers" (Deut. xxix, 25). And when, in the course of their after history, evils came upon them, the prophets, who were sent to recall them to their duty, expressly told them that calamities befell them because they broke the Commandments: "Was it not the sacrifice that you offered in the cities of Judea and in the streets of Jerusalem, you and your fathers, your kings and your princes, and the people of the land . . . . so that the Lord could no longer bear . . . . therefore your land is become a desolation . . . . without an inhabitant as at this day" (Jer. xliv, 21, 22).

Other commandments, indeed, respecting the reli-

gious and social life of the people were given to Moses, but the ten Commandments lay at the foundation of them all, and the observance of these implied the observance of all the rest. Copies of them, inscribed by God Himself in tables of stone, were given to him with orders to have them kept in the Ark within the Holy of holies: "And the Lord, when He had ended these words in Mount Sinai, gave to Moses two stone tables of testimony written with the finger of God" (Exod. xxxi, 18). "And thou shalt put in the Ark the testimony which I shall give thee" (Exod.xxv,16) That God Himself came to deliver them reveals to us their great importance; while the thunder and lightning and signs of fire that accompanied His presence but show how He is to be feared, and what folly to incur His displeasure by breaking His law (Exod.xix,16). Our Saviour if less demonstrative was hardly less emphatic as to the binding force of the Commandments. Early in His public ministry He took care to affirm that nothing should ever come to pass to weaken their hold upon the conscience of men. "Amen I say to you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall not pass of the law till all be fulfilled" (Matt. v, 18). He did not, indeed, promise temporal blessings as the covenant with the fathers did, as the reward for the faithful observance of the Commandments, but He did not hesitate to state expressly that to observe them would entitle us to eternal happiness. This, in fact, is the new covenant He made with His followers: "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments" (Matt. xix, 17). He added no new precept to those already in force, for what He calls a new commandment: "that you love one another" (John. xiii, 34) was already

in the Law: " thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself " (Matt. xxii, 39; Lev. xix, 18). His exhortations to the people were mainly on the observance of the Commandments; and the helps with which He endowed His Church had no other purpose than to make the observance of them more easy, and more universal. The exhortations of the Apostles were to the same end, and their Epistles to those whom they had recently brought over to the Faith, after urging them to be faithful to the grace they had received, are but renewed entreaties to them to observe the Commandments (which had come by the hands of angels, as St. Paul puts it). The contrast they made between what they call the Law and the Ten Commandments is very noticeable. St. Paul, while for ever urging how the Law is now out of date and no longer binding, is, equally insistent on fidelity in the observance of the Commandments. And St. Peter, while he calls the Law " a yoke put upon the necks of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear " (Acts. xv, 10), exhorts the brethren to be careful to edify the unbelieving world by their unfailing observance of the Commandments: " Dearly beloved, I beseech you to refrain yourselves from carnal desires which war against the soul. Having your conversation good among the Gentiles, that whereas they speak against you as evil doers, they may by the good works which they shall behold in you, glorify God in the day of visitation " (1 Pet. ii, 11, 12).

The Commandments are divided into two groups or sections, the one comprising those that declare our duties towards God, the other that specifies our duties towards

our neighbour. Our Lord speaks of them as but two commandments embracing the two great precepts of charity, viz., to love God and to love our neighbour. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with thy whole mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. And the second is like to this. Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments dependeth the whole law and the prophets" (Matt. xxii, 37-40). The first three Commandments have reference to God—the first of these, as to the worship we owe to Him, the second as to the respect due to His Holy Name, and the third what time is to be devoted to the public worship of God, i.e., a day each week. The next group begins with the fourth Commandment, and comprises our various duties to our fellow men. The fourth, or first of this group, treats of our duty towards our parents, i.e., to those of mankind who are nearest to us. The fifth our duty in reference to the greatest of man's gifts, viz., his life, the sixth as to his highest virtue, the next to his property, and the next to his name, the ninth and tenth forbid evil thoughts or designs on our neighbour's virtue and property.

In the next chapters we will treat of the Commandments in detail, and while in the course of our exposition we shall see what each of them embraces, by the time we have gone over them one by one it will be clear to us that under these ten Commandments is contained the whole round of man's duty. And if we are faithful in observing them in the course of our life, we may trust, and not without reason, that the reward promised for their faithful observance will be given to us after death.

" Be thou faithful until death and I will give thee the crown of everlasting life " (Apoc. ii, 10).

CHAPTER XXII.

The First Commandment.

I am the Lord thy God ..... thou shall not have strange gods before Me (Exod. xx, 2, 3).

Without outside circumstances, such as attended the delivery of the Commandments, Moses must have felt the force of these words as they came from the mouth of God, and realized the duty of paying Him the worship they demanded. It was a satisfaction to him however, that he did not then learn for the first time what his duty to God was, and that it was his own and his people's practice to discharge it at all times. To know God and to worship Him came as if by nature to the Hebrew, for it was the religion of the race. And though Moses was brought up in the house of Pharaoh, he wished rather to live amongst his own people though humble and oppressed, and to join with them in offering to the God of their fathers the worship that was traditional with them, than to pass his days in a pagan court and in the favour of a pagan prince: " He chose to be abject in the house of God than to dwell in the tabernacles of sinners " (Ps. lxxxiii). To hear now: " I am the Lord thy God " was to him like an echo of the prayer of Abraham, the

father of his race. "I lift up my hand to the Lord, the Most High, the possessor of heaven and earth" (Gen. xiv, 22), and to forbid homage to strange gods, and to command the worship of Himself alone, the one and only God, if enforcing a precept, was but confirming the worship which the Children of Israel had offered at all times. When God then came down and delivered the Commandments on Sinai, and added His Covenant of promises, He but announced what was already known and in use amongst this people, and renewed the promises He had made long before to the father of their race (Gen. xv). And so the First Commandment was for the Hebrews a grateful reminiscence of treasured memories and hopes, and a new sanction of the worship that obtained amongst them from the earliest times.

It was, however, a blessing at a critical juncture in the fortunes of this people to hear their duty proclaimed to them again, and to have the nature and extent of it defined for all time. But while the immediate purpose of God on Mount Sinai was to instruct the Hebrew, there was nothing in this First Commandment, nor in any of the others, that did not apply to all people equally with the Jews.

And surely the first duty of every man is to his Creator! The Author of man's existence, of whatever race or tribe, has first claim on his attention. To acknowledge His greatness and perfections and to pay Him suitable homage comes as an elementary duty to every mind. And hence, whether as a result of traditional teachings, or from a sort of natural instinct, men have ever recognized God the Creator and Lord of all things, and according to their knowledge and resources

have paid Him what homage they could. To this universal sentiment the classic writer of antiquity bears witness when he says: "Go where you will, you will never find a people without religion and worship"—a fact confirmed by the experience of the missionaries of all times to the present day. Spontaneously men turn to God to worship Him and so, consciously or unconsciously, bear witness to the urgency of the duty imposed by the First Commandment. Men may err and have erred in their notions of God, but under the idea of the Supreme Being they have turned to Him as if by an impulse of nature, and looked upon Him as One to be honoured and propitiated. The explicit declaration on Mount Sinai: "I am the Lord thy God," and the earlier teaching down from the Patriarchal days, were privileges accorded to the Jews. And if they could say: "In Judea God is known; His name is great in Israel" (Ps. lxxv), and if they could boast that "there was no other nation whose gods were so nigh to them as their God was present to all their petitions" (Deut. iv, 7), the elementary idea of God and of His claims for recognition and worship is common to the race, and is entertained as universally as the race is widespread.

The First Commmandment, it is to be noted, is rather an instruction or positive statement of doctrine—"I am the Lord thy God"—than a direct injunction or command. It adds, it is true, a prohibition: "thou shalt not have strange gods before Me," that is, thou shalt not render to other gods the homage due to me, the only true God. But to disclose Himself "the Lord God" was impliedly to demand or

command the worship that the Supreme Being, the Deity, the Lord of heaven and earth, is entitled to. To the mind of the Hebrew as to the instructed Christian, "the Lord God," meant the almighty and everlasting God, who, by a simple exercise of His omnipotent will, called up the universe—the heavens and the earth—out of nothing. He made them what they are, in all the splendour and variety of their natures, in the order and interdependence of their operations, and the unfailing regularity of their movements. All that one sees in heaven and earth is His, because He created all things; "the heavens declare His glory" (Ps. xviii). But He is so much greater than they, as the artificer is so much above the work of his hands. To declare Himself "the Lord God" was implicitly to command a confession of His great majesty, the incomprehensible sublimity of His Being, the unbounded riches of His wisdom and knowledge. In short all that is great and glorious and good is in Him who made all things, and in Him without measure; that "He is who is" (Exod. iii,14), that besides Him all else are but a shadow. Truth and righteousness are in Him by nature. He, in fact, is truth. He in fact, is righteousness. He, in fact, is goodness. All these are implied in the idea of God, as was well known to the Hebrew to whom this command was addressed. And while the glimmerings of all this in the uninstructed mind carries with it the sense of duty to acknowledge it and to honour Him who is so great, to fail to offer honour and praise to Him after the light from Sinai has fallen upon the world is inexcusably to fail in the first and most imperative duty we have. Hence,

what arises out of this positive revelation of God, which the First Commandment gives, is the duty on our part, to own, to confess, to acknowledge, the wondrous being of God—to bow down in humble sentiments before Him, whose wisdom and knowledge could conceive the universe, and whose power and goodness gave it stable and enduring existence. The angels who stand around His throne, and who cry out incessantly, as St. John in the Apocalypse tells us, saying: "Holy, holy, Lord God of Sabbaoth, the heavens and earth are filled with Thy glory," represent the attitude of mind befitting an intelligent creature in the conscious presence of God.

But God is not the great and adorable Creator only. He is our Teacher also. He is the Author of the Commandments we are at present discussing, and He has taught us much besides. All those enlightening truths about the Divinity which faithful men have ever held, were taught by God. The Bible with all its varied information communicated during the course of many centuries to holy men, is God's own word. But under whatever form His word comes to us, and whatever information it conveys, it has ever to be thankfully received, accepted with unhesitating certainty, and professed with unfaltering fidelity. This is the least that is due to the word of God. Then, to bring His teaching within reach of all, He entrusted it to competent hands, viz., to His Holy Church, to safeguard it, imposing upon her the duty of teaching and explaining it to the world. Having called men to the supernatural state and destined them to supernatural happiness, He revealed to them corresponding

supernatural truths. And as the knowledge of these truths is of its nature beyond our reach, and to test their truth above our capacity, He would be Himself our Teacher. Our first duty to God's word then is to accept it with unhesitating faith, to learn all that is desirable that we should know of it, and about it, and to profess it openly, and as a matter of course. And as there are what men call schools of thought, and people pride themselves on being disciples or followers of some great teacher in one branch or other of the sciences, all men should glory in the privilege of being "taught of God" in the highest branch of knowledge—in the matter of supernatural truth. But through the perversity of the human will or the accident of birth or education, there are many, unhappily, who, in varying degrees and ways, hesitate to accept the teaching that comes to us from God. Some, whom the Scripture calls fools, profess to recognize no God at all: "The fool said in his heart: There is no God" (Ps. xiii). Such persons believe nothing of divine revelation, nor can they, having destroyed the basis of all belief. Some accept the fundamental truths of revelation but, rejecting the authority of God's Church and her divinely authorized commission to teach in His name, accept on their own judgment what they consider reasonable to believe, and reject the rest. Both these classes of unbelievers, making their own judgment the criterion or test of all truth, human and divine, instead of accepting God's teaching when presented to them by the Church, "not as the word of man but the word of God," as the Thessalonians received it when presented to them by

St. Paul (1 Thess. ii, 13), take it, or refuse to take it, as seems good to themselves. Such men treat supernatural and divine truths as if coming within the province of human investigation, and failing to realize that in the things of God and the supernatural we are as children, they fail to pay to God the tribute due to His infinite truth and infinite knowledge, and so sin against the First Commandment. But as happened whenever the tradition of the true God died out amongst men, they turned to the absurd and humiliating practice of worshipping gods of their own creation, becoming dupes of the devil, so when the atheist rejects the idea of God, he becomes a victim of the most senseless and unmeaning superstitions. The misnamed Christian Scientists are evidence of this in our time, while the spread of irreligion and unbelief, with other regrettable results amongst people who are ignorant of the teachings of faith, show what sad consequences follow on failure to accept God's word when presented to us by His Church. And so, to believe God's word in the lips of His messenger, the Holy Catholic Church, while discharging a duty sanctioned by reason and enforced by the First Commandment, is to contribute towards our own moral elevation and improvement, and save ourselves from the degradation begotten of unbelief.

And as men true to themselves and to their convictions do not hesitate when occasion demands it to profess their belief in whatever they are convinced of, so and especially so, it is due to God and to His word to make open profession at proper times, and in becoming manner, of our faith in His sacred teaching. This test and proof of their fidelity Our Saviour requires of His

followers, declaring that He will acknowledge or deny them afterwards in heaven, according as they have confessed or denied Him before men on earth: "Every one, therefore, that shall confess Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. But he that shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven" (Matt. x, 32, 33). But as Almighty God, in the Old Dispensation, embodied His teaching in the religion He gave the Jews; and as Our Saviour handed over His own teaching and what was already revealed before His day, to the keeping of His Church, the profession of our belief in what God has taught is implied in membership of the Church. Every act of religion one performs is a profession of one or more revealed truths. Membership of the Church is a profession of them all, for the Church embraces them all. Again, we make open profession of our faith when we attribute to God's Providence, which rules all things, the occurrences and visitations of life, and accept them with resignation as coming from Him. And while the martyrs, who sacrificed their lives rather than deny their faith, received the crown of glory as a reward of their fidelity, so they who accept without complaint the accidents of adverse fortune, sickness, or death, because permitted or decreed by an All-wise and Merciful Providence, may look with hope to a reward such as "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath the heart of man conceived" (St. Paul).

For we have not alone to believe, but to hope in God also. He has promised Eternal Life to all who are faithful unto death. "He who perseveres to the end shall be saved" (Matt. xxiv, 13). The fact of creating us out

of His own spontaneous goodness, for eternal happiness, compels the hope that God will do His part to realize His own purpose over us. Given an honest will to do what in us lies, we are bound to trust that God will do all else that may be necessary, and that He alone can do, to bring us to the happy end He destined us to reach. Not to firmly hope for eternal life from God, and an abundance of the requisite helps to bring us safely to it, given our own honest and earnest will and efforts, would be to argue contradictory dispositions in Him in reference to the eternal welfare of immortal souls which He created purposely for happiness. Sinful against the First Commandment as want of confident trust in God, founded on His unbounded goodness and promises and power, would be at any time, after the Mystery of the Incarnation and the life and sufferings of the Son of God to save sinners, it would be so derogatory to God's goodness as to appear like the sin against the Holy Ghost, which our Lord says shall not be forgiven (Luke xii, 10).

Nor are Faith and Hope enough to satisfy our obligations arising from the First Commandment; the greatest service yet remains, i.e., to love God. God would have us love Him, having created men simply out of love: "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore have I drawn thee" (Jer. xxxi, 3). Service that is not actuated and inspired by love of Him will not satisfy Him. He will not accept the forced unwilling service of slaves. He will have the free spontaneous loving service of children. Nor is it outward acts of even heroic sacrifice or devotion He requires, but the willing loving service of the heart. All our works must

be inspired and actuated by love. No one must compare with Him in our appreciation. He is the source from which all things have come, and the Author of all good that we admire in all things! No one may compete with Him, therefore, in our appreciation, that is, we must love Him above all things. Like all else, too, He created us for Himself (Prov. xvi, 4). We must give Him back what He gave, viz., the service of all our faculties. Nothing else, indeed, is worthy of such faculties as ours—the reflection and living image of God Himself. And hence Our Lord declared, nor was it said then for the first time, that the first and greatest of the Commandments runs as follows: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment" (Matt. xxii, 37, 38; Deut. vi, 5). By the First Commandment we are obliged, therefore, to believe habitually all the Church teaches as revealed by God, to hope constantly that God will grant us the graces necessary to enable us to attain our destiny, viz., eternal happiness, and thirdly, to direct the whole course and all the actions of our life to God as the author, the support, and the end of our existence, that is, to love God. It is necessary to make acts of faith and hope and charity. to express, i.e., our belief and hope and love, and so to give actual utterance to those feelings of the mind and heart in which the worship of God consists.

The First Commandment implies, moreover, the duty of prayer. There are different kinds of prayer, according to the different motives that influence us in addressing God. We have already in this chapter referred to the prayer of praise and adoration which springs so readily

in the heart from reflecting on the glorious works of God. The Scriptures give a great example of the practice of this kind of prayer. The older prophets praised God much for the works of creation, and the sublimity of their conceptions and the power and beauty of their language when treating of the works of God were not unworthy of the splendid subject for which they praised the Creator. The Book of Job, the Psalms, the Books of Wisdom, Isaias, and many other portions of the Old Testament, as they trace out the splendours of creation, and glorify God whose magnificence is translucent in His works, teach us the duty we owe to Him, to praise and magnify Him in His creatures.

The sense of God's favours also was keen and living in those Scriptural writers, and whether for their people at large or for themselves alone, they did not fail to recall His many mercies in the past and pay Him thanks for them. David frequently in the Psalms, and St. Paul in all his Epistles, is constantly thanking God and calling upon his disciples to thank Him for His blessings. Now everyone can recognize his indebtedness to God. Whether in the order of nature or of grace, all men, especially all who have had the privileges of the Gospel light and the many blessings that fall to the portion of the children of the Church, can understand that we owe it to the Almighty God to thank Him daily for His favours and the unstinted measure of His gifts. The great Law-giver who had such exceptional experience of God's goodness and favour to His people, gives a striking example in this respect, and again and again in His writings, He gives praise and thanksgiving to God for His blessings of all kinds. (Exod. xv; **Deut. xxxii**).

And since, as St. Paul says, no one has anything that was not given to him: "what hast thou that thou hast not received" (1 Cor. iv, 7), to thank God for His gifts to us is a duty of gratitude to be faithfully discharged.

Finally, we have to pray to God for His blessings and graces. Though by our exertions we may procure many things that we want, and many more by the help of others, we are ever conscious of the many things still for which we have to turn to God. In all our spiritual needs we depend on Him alone. In our greater temporal wants He is our only helper. In the countless needs whether of soul or body, actual or possible, with which we are ever faced, God alone is the all-sufficient and inexhaustible source of succour. We owe it to Him to acknowledge this truth, and to give expression to our sense of it, praying to Him for protection and help at all times. In the order of His Providence He has left many things to be given as the result of prayer. His encouragements, so frequently given, to pray without ceasing, and for all favours, show that He has so arranged it that much remains to be given us as the result of prayer. The whole range of Scriptural experience from the date of the Commandments shows what wonderful effects are brought about by prayer. And when burdened with a sense of sin, and conscience speaks within us; when it comes that "I will recount to Thee all my years in the bitterness of my soul" (Isaias xxxviii, 15), and the offences we have committed stand out against us—then we must plead for forgiveness, as the prophet did for mercy and pardon (Ps. l). An urgent and ever-present duty to God, therefore, who

has so arranged it that we should ever need His aid, is the prayer of petition.

Finally, the worship of God implies the duty of sacrifice to Him. Men have never deemed their duty to God satisfied by the homage of the heart and lips. They have ever felt that for God's greatness and majesty much more is demanded of them. Hence have they worshipped Him by sacrifice. And this they have regarded as His special and incommunicable right. His divine majesty and His full and exclusive ownership of all things in heaven and earth can in no other way be properly attested. Men have ever felt so, and from the days of Adam have offered sacrifice to God. Almost the first thing recorded of the children of our First Parents is that they offered sacrifice of their goods to Him. In the Patriarchal times the same practice prevailed, and in the Jewish religion, of which God is Himself the author, a large place in assigned to sacrifice. And though in offering they immolated the victim to testify to the over-lordship of the Almighty, not until the Sacrifice of the New Law, once offered on Calvary and ever since mystically repeated in the Mass, was a sacrifice fully worthy of Him offered to the Most High. This is amongst our most signal blessings under Christ, that in the Mass we have a Sacrifice fully worthy and fully adequate to the ends for which Sacrifice is offered. By acts then, of faith, hope, and charity, made regularly and often ; and by prayers of one kind or another made daily ; and by assisting at stated times at Mass—we fulfil the positive duties to God imposed by the First Commandment.

We need not dwell at length on the reverence and

devotion fostered in the Church and manifested by the faithful towards the Angels and their Queen, the Blessed Virgin, and the Saints—as if incompatible with the worship due to God, and therefore forbidden by the First Commandment. In honouring them we certainly do not give to creatures the honour due to God alone. Though we reverence the Saints and pray to them, and hold feast days in their honour, and dedicate churches and altars to their memory and their names, there is ever a fundamental difference in our devotion to all creatures, no matter how excellent and deserving, from the tribute we pay to God. He is the infinite Source of all created and uncreated good. The best of His creatures in heaven and earth but participate in their measure in the inexhaustible depths of His riches. High though their attainments in the kingdoms of grace and glory, they are creatures ever, and infinitely distanced from the infinite, ever-living Source of all their greatness. But if the heavens declare God's glory, though without life or motion of their own, and if we praise Him for the excellence He has stamped upon things that are unconscious of His gifts, we must surely praise God in His far nobler works—His Saints. Nor must we ignore their merits in so loyally answering to His grace and co-operating with Him in the noble works to which they dedicated their lives, and for which He has crowned them with glory everlasting. Nor does any instructed Christian dissociate them in thought from the Author and the finisher of their perfections. If we honour them we give honour where honour is due. And if the nations have their heroes, and venerate their memories, so does the Church those of her children who drew from her

treasure house of grace the light and aid that were their mainstay in life and helped them up—God co-operating—the steep path of virtue and self-denial they so nobly trod, in the service of their Creator. Their example, too, is our pattern and encouragement, and their prayers and intercession, always more effective than ours, in the ears of their satisfied Creator, are to be desired and sought for. The intercession of the Saints is specially desirable. Our claims on the attention of Almighty God, at the best, are weak. His mercy indeed is our principal dependence, because of our sins. And as in dealing with the Jews, He so often desired the holy and virtuous, as Moses and Job and others, to pray in behalf of the people, and as they so often gained His favour on the ground of the virtues of the patriarchs of which they reminded Him: "Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Thy servants, . . . and the Lord was appeased" (Exod. xxxii, 13, 14), so should we appeal to Him by the saints, whose prayers are so much more acceptable and efficacious than our own.

And as we honour the Saints, so, too, may we pay respect to everything intimately associated with them—their relics, their images, their effects. This is specially true, in like manner, of everything closely associated with Our Blessed Saviour Himself. As we treasure the memorials of departed or absent friends and respect them for their sake, so we hold in honour the relics and images and mementoes of the Saints, and venerate the instruments of Our Saviour's Passion. As virtue was in His very garments in His lifetime: "And as many as touched the hem of His garment were made whole" (Matt. xiv, 36), the instruments by which He accomplished the work of our Redemption

received a consecration special to themselves, deserve our veneration, and may be channels of great grace and blessing. Even the shadow of Peter cured the sick, (Acts v), and handkerchiefs and aprons that touched St. Paul were applied to the infirm and "the diseases departed from them" (Acts xix, 12).

By the acts of faith, hope and charity, then, by frequent and devout prayer, and attendance at the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, we discharge what obligations we owe directly to God, as contained in, and enforced by the First and the greatest of Commandments. As a sort of sequence to what we owe to Him comes our duty of respect and devotion to the Saints. Far from detracting from the honour we give to God, and what is due to Him, we but do Him honour when we recognize how great He is in His Saints: when we honour them for their virtues and good works, and by devotion and prayer to them try to secure for ourselves the benefits of their availing intercession before the throne of Mercy. We have only to add that the doctrine here stated has been long since defined in the Councils of the Church, especially at the Seventh General Council held at Nice, A.D 787. At this Council the doctrine of the Church on the reverence due to sacred images was defined and declared. We have to note here, too, that the final refutation of the teaching opposed to the veneration of the images of the Saints was the work of an Irish writer, Dungal of Pavia, who ends his treatise on this subject in the following energetic language: "It is astonishing insolence to censure a doctrine and practice which for eight hundred and twenty

years was followed by the Blessed Fathers, by most religious princes and by all Christian households up to the present time." What was the practice for the first eight hundred years of the Church is the uniform and unbroken practice to the present day; and will continue to be so to the end.

Conscious as instructed Catholics are of the place proper to the Saints and servants of God; conscious, too, that it is His way so often to grant favours through the agency of those who come nearest to Him in excellence and merit, and well aware besides of the graces that at all times have been obtained by pious suppliants through the intercession of the Saints, and above all of the Blessed Virgin, Mother of God, they will never fail by prayer to secure their influence to obtain from God, the Source of all gifts, what favours they ask.

Different from the well-founded devotion paid by the Church to the Saints, whose presence and influence with God is assured, are the practices of attempted converse with spirits and the spirit world, which have gained favour with a certain class of unbelievers in more recent times. Impatient for information about the unseen world, which God has not been pleased to grant, these people turn, they know not to whom, and accept unsupported statements from speakers whose identity they cannot test, and whose utterances they cannot verify. For mortal men it is enough to recognize that God has revealed all that is good and useful for them to know about the future life, and the conditions prevailing there. To Him and to the spirits of the just, who are ever in His presence,

and rejoice in happiness with Him, we may address our prayers and supplications for all useful purposes. To address others besides in pursuit of favours or information that He does not grant, is to offend God, to expose onself to deception, and to break the First Commandment. The teaching of the Church in this matter is declared in Canon 1276 of the New Code, which says: "It is good and useful, to humbly invoke the servants of God who are reigning with Christ, and to venerate their relics and their images, but above all the faithful should honour with filial devotion the Most Blessed Virgin Mary."

CHAPTER XXIII.

The Second Commandment.

"*Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain*" (Exod. xx).

The divine Nature and Being of God entitle Him to the highest worship. We can never think of God except with sentiments of deepest reverence. Whatever homage we pay Him, even the most profound and earnest, we ever feel falls short of what can do Him adequate worship. Such is the Being and Nature of God! To guide us in our duty to Him He gave us the First Commandment, and as a corollary to it He added the Second, teaching how we

should reverence His name. "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain" (Exod. xx, 7).

The use and purpose of a name is to call to our mind the person to whom it belongs. However a name comes to be imposed, whether suggested by some special quality or attribute of the person named, or for some outside association, as the names of relatives or saints are given to children, the function of a name in every case is to distinguish the one who bears it, from every other person. And so well does it serve this purpose that once one's name is mentioned the person answering it comes before the mind of the hearer, and is present to his thoughts. We know things by their names, altogether irrespective of the reasons that suggested them—whether the name connotes a quality, an outside circumstance, or is purely conventional or arbitrary. Whether the name God, in the older languages, was expressive of the idea of Him whose over-ruling Providence regulates all things (*St. Thomas*, p. 1, q. xiii), or was simply a name exclusively applied to the Deity, matters little. To the mind of all men, God is the distinctive appellation of the Supreme Being, the Creator and Sovereign Lord of all things, and answers fully to the purposes served by every name. When we hear it mentioned the Almighty is present in our thoughts. The influence of one's name, on the other hand, on him who bears it, is to summon his attention, once his name is spoken. Habit and experience make this clear to every one. No one is insensible to the mention of his name.

For this two-fold reason it is evident that the name of God cannot be used except with respect and reverence.

And this all the more that such is our nature that familiarity even with the most sacred things is no help, but the contrary, to our proper appreciation of them. Now reverence for what is above us is a condition for our own elevation and improvement. If sacred things, and especially the most sacred of all things, suffer depreciation in our thoughts, one of the most effective agencies for controlling our wayward nature, for refining and upraising it, loses much of its effect on us, to the detriment, not of ourselves only but of others also. Now God is sacredness and sanctity itself. The circumstances that attended His descent on Sinai, had this amongst other purposes: to impress upon the Hebrew mind a due sense of reverential awe of His divine majesty. The rites and ceremonial of the worship which He had instituted for them had the same intent. The institution of the Holy of holies, or that sacred sanctuary of the Temple, to which even the High Priest had not access passing once a year, had the same meaning and purpose. Hence when He revealed the name to them by which they might invoke and address Him in their prayers, He fenced it around with a guarding precept, lest by a too familiar use their reverence for it should suffer. Indeed, He seemed slow to reveal His name at all, as we see in His answer to Moses when he asked His name (Exod. iii, 13). And as we can readily understand, there was a higher motive still for this Second Commandment. It was to secure the reverence due to His name itself, because it is His name. The reverence due to it arises from the fact that it is the name of God—that the Deity answers to it. Every other name is the name of a

man, of a creature, of a something limited and finite in every way. He who answers to the name of God is Infinite, the Everlasting—the living source from whom all things have come to be, and that by the simple exercise of an omnipotence that is guided by an all-seeing wisdom, and informed by a sanctity that gives the tone and character to all His doings. The name of such a one is necessarily venerable—reverence and respect are due to it from every intelligent creature. "I will give praise, O God, to Thy name because it is good," said the Psalmist (Ps. liii). "I will bless Thy name for ever, yea, for ever and ever" (Ps. cxliv). Indeed in the Scriptures the custom of the prophets was to identify God with His name, and to honour His name as they honoured Himself. And surely in honouring His name they honoured Him who was known by it. And since He could not be invoked or called on as both in the Old and New Testament we are exhorted to do: "Call upon Me in the day of trouble and I will deliver thee" (Ps. xlix), except by the invocation of His name, to use it reverently is a duty and an honour we owe to God. And as in laying down laws for our guidance He does not exceed what is becoming and proper; commanding the respectful use of His name, He but taught us how we might becomingly make use of it. This is very strikingly taught us by Our Divine Saviour in the prayer He composed for the use of Christians for all time. The first wish expressed in it is that the name of God may be honoured by all men: "Hallowed be Thy name."

Now what is here said in reference to the name of God, is equally, and in a sense more so, applicable to

the holy name Jesus. When we invoke the name of God we call upon the Creator and Lord of heaven and earth; when we call the name Jesus we call upon the same God and Lord, with the now added significance of Saviour and Redeemer. And if the sense of the Divine Majesty which is awakened in us by the name of God secures reverence in the use of His name, the added idea of Saviour, which the sacred name recalls, brings a new suggestion of grateful reverence which should be ever present in the mind of a Christian when the name Jesus is pronounced. So deep a sense of reverence was felt by the Jew for the proper name of God that when they met it in the pages of the Scriptures they never mentioned it, but the name of Lord, or some such name, ever did duty for Jehovah. It would be a fitting tribute to Our Saviour if His sacred name was treated with a like reverence by His followers. It should never be used, at any rate, except in prayer, and then with becoming devotion. It is a name that came in the first instance from heaven. It was not given by His parents but by the Eternal Father. This name is a part of the message of the Incarnation. "Thou shalt bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus" (Luke i, 31). The Redeemer is known to men by this name. And at the mention of it the central figure in the world's history that He is, is present to men's thoughts. To the pious Catholic in trial and sorrow, the mention of this name brings soothing comfort and courage. To call this name is to bring up the image of Him who experienced every trial for men by which character is tested. And He is

the Saviour of mankind, not by His sufferings and death alone, but by the grand example He gave the world, of a man whose nobility is seen in the eclipse of humiliation as in the glory of triumph. At the mention of His name, St. Paul says: "every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth," for that "God hath given Him a name which is above all names" (Phil. iii, 9, 10).

There are two forms of invocation of the name of God that demand special attention. The first is when one takes an oath, the second when a person makes a vow. To take an oath is to call upon God to witness that we are stating what is true. When it is a matter of establishing the truth of an assertion that cannot be otherwise proved, we cannot do better than call in a witness. In the Old Law if a man charged another with a crime, the word of one witness was not a sufficient proof of guilt. "One witness shall not rise up against any man, whatsoever the sin or wickedness be: but in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall stand" (Deut. xix, 15). Our Lord recalled this rule of evidence, reaffirming it when He gave directions how to treat an offending brother. "If thy brother shall offend against thee go and rebuke him between thee and him alone. . . . if he will not hear thee, take one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may stand" (Matt. xviii, 15,16). But because men may be mistaken in their impression about anything, or may be not too careful of what they say in giving evidence, or be so perverse as to state a falsehood, and even succeed in getting others to support them in what they say, the sense of

mankind has ever in such circumstances turned to the one remaining security for truth, requiring men to affirm what they allege, on oath—calling God to witness that they speak the truth. " An oath for confirmation is the end of all their controversy (Heb. vi, 16).

An oath, then, of its nature is a tribute of honour men pay to God. It is a confession of a knowledge on His part that embraces the details and accidents of life, of a truthfulness in vouching if necessary, for what He knows, that can never fail us; and of an ever wakeful interest in the every-day concerns of men. But as we shrink from calling the attention of our superiors to the petty subjects of our daily interest, and we are careful about the truth of what we say when we have to speak of what is of real concern to us, so, we may not call on God to witness that we speak the truth unless the importance of the point at issue warrants so solemn an invocation. Truth, judgment, and reverence must ever characterize an oath if the invocation of the name of God which it involves is to fall within the limits defined by the Second Commandment.

To invoke the name of God thoughtlessly as men so often do, though a profane practice and to be corrected, is not, however, a grievous sin. But there is no more gross misuse of the name of God than to invoke it deliberately in support of what one knows to be untrue. This is a most grievous sin. Nor can any more approbrious epithet be addressed to anyone than to call him a perjurer. Men are put upon their oath because it is felt that no one would run the risk of calling God to witness a lie; and to attempt to associate

Him with oneself in telling a lie—which the perjurer does—goes to the root of the Divine attributes, and is a direct outrage against God!

The practice of employing an oath to confirm a promise is very ancient. It was usual with the Patriarchs when they wanted some important matter done, to bind a person under oath to carry out their will. Thus Jacob when about to die, and not wishing to be buried in Egypt, made Joseph, his son, swear to him "that thou shalt take me away out of this land and bury me in the burying place of my ancestors" (Gen. xlvii, 30). When the sanction of an oath is thus added to a promise it is a religious duty to respect the promise so made, and to carry it out with fidelity. For God has been called to witness that you intend to carry out the promise. Only such a change as would forbid the promise in the first instance can dispense one afterwards from keeping it.

The ceremonies attendant on the taking of an oath are different in different times and places. Some simply raise the right hand towards heaven. In the Church we touch the Missal or Book of the Gospels with the open hand. In the courts of justice the Bible is handed to the person taking the oath, to kiss it. These are but various ways of invoking God by the use of something closely connected with Him, and surrounding so solemn an act with appropriate solemnity and ceremonies.

To make a promise to God is a well known religious practice. But a promise may be little more than the expression of a present intention or purpose to perform certain acts of virtue. A person for example may promise to be charitable to the poor, to abstain from

strong drink, etc. Or it may be the expression of a deliberate intention of binding oneself to a specific offering of something to God that we know is acceptable to Him. The former kind of promise is no more than a resolution, the latter is called a vow. We are familiar with such promises in the Scriptures from the earliest times. In these promises one deliberately imposes on oneself an obligation to do something that redounds to God's honour. To fail to observe that promise afterwards is a violation of the Second Commandment. "When thou hast made a vow to the Lord thy God thou shalt not delay to pay it: because the Lord thy God will require it. And if thou delay, it shall be imputed to thee for a sin. If thou wilt not promise, thou wilt be without sin. But that which is gone out of thy lips thou shalt do as thou hast promised to the Lord thy God" (Deut xxiii, 21). And the Psalmist says: "Offer to God the sacrifice of praise and pay thy vows to the Most High" (Ps. xlvi). In most promises people make to God, they but resolve to do what in common with all Christians they are bound to do already, nor does a person mean thereby to impose any new obligation upon himself. When one promises to be charitable to the poor, e.g., one but resolves to conform to the great obligation binding all Christians, to help our neighbours in their need. It is the same when one promises to abstain from intoxicating drink, or to avoid sin, as we promise as often as we say the Act of Contrition. And even when one goes beyond the line of ordinary Christian duty in the matter of temperance, e.g., and takes a total abstinence pledge then such a pledge does not in itself imply any

obligation to abstain under the pain of sin. This has been especially decided by Pope Leo XIII. It is different when one makes a vow. In that case one goes beyond the line of Christian duty and voluntarily imposes on onself an obligation that arises altogether from one's spontaneous act. One can take the pledge in this sense, too, of course. " If thou wilt not promise, thou wilt be without sin." " But that which is gone out of thy lips thou shalt observe " (Deut. xxiii, 23). Any act of virtue, such as to give alms to the poor, to hear Mass, to fast on certain days, or to abstain from strong drink, may be the matter of a vow. Pilgrimages to some renowned shrine, or to the Holy Land, were often in former ages made the matter of a vow by many devout people all over Europe. Before making a vow, young persons particularly should be advised by someone more experienced than themselves. For the obligation will arise as often as one promises what one can perform: nor will the obligation cease should the performance afterwards prove troublesome or inconvenient. Besides these private vows there are the well-known vows which the Church imposes on all who embrace the religious state. Religious life in fact consists in the observance of the three vows of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience to the will of one's Religious Superior. All who embrace a religious life take these vows, and the faithful observance of them through life by so many holy men and women in all ages of the Church is that singular phenomenon which finds no parallel in any other religious association, and is possible in the Catholic Church only through loyal co-operation with the grace with which her Divine Founder so richly endowed her.

"Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Matt. xii, 34), and where there is reverence in the heart for what is holy, it will find expression in appropriate language. Nor will such speech be confined to what is holy by nature, like God and the Divine Persons, it will extend to everything that participates in the essential holiness of God. Hence, too, the duty of speaking reverently of God enjoined by the Second Commandment, extends to everything closely allied to Him. The Blessed Virgin, and the Saints, Religion, its practices and its ministers, and everything relating to the divine service, are to be referred to in language breathing reverence and respect. The nature of these things entitles them to it. The example of Our Lord, who drove the money changers out of the Temple, and would suffer no word of disparagement of the priesthood (Matt. xxiii), teaches how we should speak of the ministers of religion of which He is Himself the great High Priest, and whose mysteries are not things of earth but of heaven. And so did St. Paul, who quoted against himself: "Thou shalt not speak evil of the prince of the people" (Acts xxiii, 5), when he reprehended in mistake the High Priest. (Exod. xxii, 28). Our effort should be to acquire and cherish a true appreciation of sacred things, and a deep sense of reverence for God, and our language then will not fail to follow the lines laid down by the Second Commandment.

CHAPTER XXIV.

The Third Commandment.

"*Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath Day*" (Exod. xx, 8).

There was one thing that Almighty God especially wished to impress deeply on the Hebrew mind, viz., that He was the Lord of heaven and earth and of all things—the living source from whom all things had come, and therefore to whom all things belonged. As evidence of this He commanded that the first of everything they had should be offered to Him. "Sanctify unto Me every first-born . . . among the Children of Israel as well of men as of beasts, for they are all Mine" (Exod. xiii, 2). The first fruits of the year should be offered in like manner: "Thou shalt carry the first fruits of the corn of thy ground to the house of the Lord thy God" (Exod. xxiii, 19). The great annual Festivals of Pentecost and Tabernacles were timed to acknowledge with thanksgiving the blessings of the harvest and the vintage. And to emphasize this the more, He ordered that a day should be set aside each week which should be consecrated wholly to His honour. "Six days shalt thou labour and shalt do all thy works: but on the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God. Thou shalt do no work on it, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy beast, nor the stranger that is within thy gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all the things that are in them, and rested on the

seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the seventh day and sanctified it" (Exod. xx, 9–11).

This command is repeated again and again in the Books of Moses, and in Deuteronomy, Ch. v, in practically the same words when he says: "Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy works: the seventh day is the day of the Sabbath, that is, the rest of the Lord thy God. Thou shalt not do any work therein." This connection of the Sabbath with the rest of the Lord after the work of creation is noticeable and instructive. The observance of the Sabbath after six days of labour was to be a perpetual commemoration, by every successive generation of men, of the rest of the Almighty after He had laboured six days at the creation of the world. "For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all the things that are in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the seventh day and sanctified it" (Exod. xx, 11). The observance of the Sabbath, therefore, is a profession on the part of the people, of the creation of the world by Almighty God. And to proclaim that fact and suitably to acknowledge it, was the Sabbath introduced.

The rest to be observed on the Sabbath was absolute. Not alone was outside work on which men are engaged forbidden, but what is done indoors and is mostly the work of women was equally prohibited. What could remain over till next day had to be put off, and what could be prepared on the previous day should be got ready, so that nothing would interfere with the general cessation from labour that was to prevail all over on the Sabbath day. "To-morrow is the rest of the Sabbath

sanctified to the Lord. Whatsoever work is to be done, do it, and the meats that are to be dressed, dress them, and whatsoever shall remain lay it up till the morning" (Exod. xvi, 23). What could more strikingly illustrate the rest of the Lord when He had finished on the sixth day the groundwork of the creation, than the universal rest of mankind after their six days of busy labour. And what better evidence of the great truth of creation, which men should ever gratefully acknowledge, than the enduring observance of the Sabbath by so many generations of the most enlightened races and families of mankind ?

To train the Jewish people from the first in this strict observance of the Sabbath, and to teach them to anticipate on the previous day what should otherwise be done on the Sabbath day, the Manna on which the people were fed for forty years in the wilderness came in double quantity, to be gathered on the morning before the Sabbath. And while what was stored for next day kept good for use on the Sabbath, any that remained over after another day was always unfit for use and putrified. And not only was cooking forbidden on the Sabbath, but to light a fire on that day was against the law, and in express terms prohibited: "You shall kindle no fire in any of your habitations on the Sabbath" (Exod. xxxv, 3). In general, the Sabbath was a day on which no sound of labour was to be heard from end to end of the land, but the people, their servants, and even the beasts of burden, freed from their usual toil, should enjoy the Sabbath rest at the end of each recurring week. For breaking this law a capital punishment was threatened, and so dreadful a sanction helped, doubtless,

to secure for this day both as to the letter and the spirit of the law, a respect and fear that made the danger of its violation remote as possible. "Keep you My Sabbath, for it is holy unto you; he that shall profane it, shall be put to death; he that shall do any work in it, his soul shall perish out of the midst of His people" (Exod. xxxi, 14). In this way God would impress upon His people the thought that rest for the purpose He intended is quite as important in due season for man as labour. And if we must work for our subsistence during six days of the week, as God worked six days at the Creation, we must rest on the seventh day as He rested, and devote that day of rest to the honour of Him to whose power and goodness the world and all it contains owe existence. Tenacious of everything pertaining to their national and historic religion, the Jews held the observance of the Sabbath in great respect at every period of their history. And though to-day, and for centuries, scattered abroad among Christian nations where Sunday is kept holy, their loyalty to the Sabbath of their fathers is not the least remarkable custom of this wonderful people.

The Third Commandment, it is noticeable, prescribed no more than complete rest from labour for the Sabbath. And though nothing is discernible in his writings as being introduced by Moses for the sanctification of that day, and preventing the sacred rest of the day from degenerating into mere idleness, it is clear that in the later centuries of the Jewish history the Sabbath was not alone a day of rest, but of positive religious observance also. The multiplication of synagogues throughout the Holy Land and outside it, wherever the Jews were

in numbers, for centuries before the time of Our Lord as well as subsequent to it, and the frequenting of these places of worship by the people on the Sabbath for prayers and hymns, and to hear the word of God, show that the idea of the Sabbath as a day of worship, as of rest, was strong in the mind of the Jews. Of Our Lord it is written: "And He came to Nazareth where He was brought up; and He went into the synagogue according to His custom on the Sabbath day, and He rose up to read" (Luke iv, 16). The same is said of St. Paul: "They came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews, and Paul according to his custom went unto them; and for three Sabbath days he reasoned with them out of the Scriptures" (Acts xvii, 1-2). That the reading of the Scriptures and the explanation of the word of God by the priests and doctors of the Law, for the people in their places of meeting on the Sabbath, was a practice introduced in later times, can easily be understood, because the Scriptures themselves were the growth of time. But it is extremely likely it was but a growth and development of the religious practices counselled by the Law-giver to enable the people to celebrate the Sabbath with religious and holy observances.

There is hardly anything that better illustrates "the freedom wherewith Christ has made us free" (Gal. iv, 31), than the liberty extended to us in the observance of the Sabbath under His dispensation of mercy and grace. The Third, like the other Commandments of the Decalogue, is taken bodily as it stands in the words of Moses, and incorporated in the Law of Christ. All the Commandments are of the essence of the moral law and incapable of change. But the letter of the law is one

thing, the spirit of the law another thing. And while the Jew in the Old Dispensation was bound to the letter of the law—to do what and as it laid down,—Christ has given a new setting and a new form of expression to what is invariable in the law, and above all phases of time, viz., man's unchanging obligation to the service and the worship of his Creator. And as Christ repealed none of the Commandments but proclaimed rather that he came to fulfil the Law—"I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil" (Matt. v, 17) the Sabbath rest from labour of the Third Commandment, passes on to the New Dispensation, though the manner of the rest, and the mode of sanctifying it are considerably changed. And as the onward movement of time and the varying circumstances that come with it cannot undo the fact of creation and the rest of the Creator that followed on it; and as that fact is as great in itself and as full of the promise of blessings for the last ages of the world, if not more so, as for the first, the duty of commemorating that rest of the Creator since He wishes it, will endure to the end. Hence are men bound to cease from labour on the day of religious rest to-day, as the Jew was bound, and is it a duty to sanctify the rest of that day not alone by the motive and purpose that inspire it but by the faithful observance of the practices which the Church, as interpreter of the law of Christ, prescribes to us (*New Code*, Canon 1248).

The first thing noticeable about the Sabbath rest under the New Law is its change from Saturday to Sunday. The difficulty encountered by the Apostles in introducing the Law of the Redeemer among the Jewish converts was to make them feel that the Old Law had seen its

day and done its work. The Jews were passionately attached to their religion—Jerusalem and Sion meant much to them. To come up to the Holy City on the great Festivals was a part of the life of a Jew and sacred to him by personal and national traditions and memories: "I rejoice at the things that were said to me; we shall go into the house of the Lord (Ps. cxxi, 1). But a change had come with the Redemption, and worship must express that change. Good Friday, indeed, that had witnessed the great sacrifice of the Lamb of God, might give a claim to Friday above Saturday, if a change of the day of worship must be made, but the gloom and sorrow of such a day is not in keeping with the spirit of a world gladdened with the tidings of Redemption, and brightened by the light of the Resurrection. Then the Spirit that is to quicken the children of God for all time into obedience to the Law of the Redeemer came not on Friday or Saturday but on Sunday. Hence that day marked by such striking and joyful events, and on which the full light of the Gospel burst in the face of a world of religious chaos and uncertainty—that day on which men felt, for the first time, a light and guidance coming to them from lips inspired by the Holy Spirit, and saw that the regeneration of mankind had actually set in—was decreed to be henceforth kept sacred through all the coming generations of the world.

And the change to Sunday seems to have been introduced at once. There is proof that it was an already established practice as early as twenty years after the Ascension. Narrating the travels of St. Paul in Asia, St. Luke (Acts xx, 7), says: "And on the first day of the week, when we were assembled to break bread, Paul

discoursed with them, being to depart on the morrow." This happened at Troas where his companions had been waiting a few day for St. Paul. They stayed seven days in all, "and on the first day of the week, when they were assembled to break bread,"—as if that was the thing to do on that day St. Paul addressed the congregation, that is, he preached at Mass on Sunday to the faithful as is the custom in the Church ever since. This happened in the year A.D. 57. There is a reference in the first Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians (Ch. xvi, 2), which betokens the same practice amongst the faithful at Corinth in those days. The Apostle is referring at the end of his Epistle to the collection for the poor, and he tells them: "As I have given order to the Churches of Galatia so do ye also. On the *first day of the week* let everyone of you put apart . . . what shall please him" (xvi, 2). From the first the custom of making a collection for the poor and for religious purposes at the end of the religious meetings obtained in the Church. In perhaps the oldest uninspired Christian record extant, which goes back to between A.D. 80 and 100, entitled: "The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles", we read (Cap. xiv): "Every Sunday of the Lord, having assembled together, break bread and give thanks, having confessed your sins that your sacrifice be pure." Here Sunday is specified as the day to come together to assist at Mass and to receive Holy Communion, having already gone to confession. What is this but exactly the practice that prevails everywhere to-day.

In the Epistle of Barnabas as it is called, an almost equally old document, we read: "We celebrate the

eighth day with joy on which Jesus rose from the dead." Here again Sunday is the day kept holy and the reason for keeping it a joyful festival is because Christ rose on that day from the dead. About forty years after the date of this letter St. Justin in his famous apology for Christianity addressed to the Emperor of the day, says: "On the day called of the Sun an assembly in one place is made of all who live in the towns and in the country, and each one receives a distribution and share of the Eucharist"; and lower down he says again: "We all make our reunion on the day of the Sun, since it is the first day on which God, changing the darkness and matter, made the world, and Jesus Christ Our Saviour rose from the dead." And so we notice that already in the first century of the Christian era, and in the lifetime of the Apostles, Sunday was the established day of rest, and the day was sanctified by religious practices.

Much more if it were necessary can be gathered from the scanty works of known writers of those early days, to show how Sunday observance was a well-known Christian usage coming down from the Apostles. Nor indeed is there to be discovered anywhere a reference of any sort to question it, or to suggest that Sunday had not been at any time regarded as the Christian Sabbath. Some of the oldest writers, as those quoted above, give the reason for keeping Sunday. And this is what naturally suggests itself to everyone, viz., because on that day the Author of our faith, the Redeemer of the world, rose from the dead and established for all time the great truth of His divinity. Sunday then is the Christian Sabbath or day of

religious rest, sacred to the commemoration of the Resurrection of Christ Our Lord from the dead.

Nor was Sunday ever observed as a day of rest alone in the Christian Church ; from the first and ever onwards it was sanctified by religious observances. Mass was celebrated in the presence of the assembled people ; the word of God was preached to them; in the early ages all were accustomed to receive Holy Communion. The Homilies of the Fathers as they are called—that is, the expositions of the Gospel that we have from all the great early writers, most of them Bishops—were sermons preached to the people at Mass on Sundays. St. Augustine tells us that St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, to whose sermons he owed his conversion, preached at Mass every Sunday. So did St. Augustine himself afterwards, and this was the general practice.

The rest from servile work was ever regarded as an essential part of the Sunday observance. It was not so strictly observed as to the kind of labour that may not be done as was the custom and the law among the Jews. What was forbidden was expressed exactly in the words above quoted, viz., servile—that is, the laborious toil that falls to the servant class. And indeed, one may say in the Christian Church servile labour is forbidden both in order to give the Sunday rest to the worker as well as to secure for him—exempt that day from his usual toil—an opportunity of devoting one day of the week to the practice of the duties of religion. Those above the working class, while obliged to avoid servile work also, are no less obliged to rest on Sundays. Nor is it easy to conceive

anything so beautiful in itself, and so suggestive of man's great business in life and his final destiny when the toils and trials of life are over, than the dedication of Sunday the world over to rest from labour, and the dedication and devotion of the time and opportunities of that day at the opening of each recurring week to the service of religion and the worship and honour of God. The work associated with professional callings, with business and commercial employments, no less than trades, and in short, the business of secular avocations generally, to which the working day is ordinarily devoted in the many positions and offices of life, as well as servile and manual labour, are forbidden, as inconsistent with the rest and incompatible with the religious practices and disposition of mind that are requisite for the sanctification of the Lord's day. Whatever on the other hand is requisite for the health and well-being of a person, and much more so of the community, and that cannot be anticipated, is not included in the prohibition of Sunday labour. Hence, necessary household work, the necessary care and attendance on children or cattle, and of course the care of the sick, entail no violation of Sunday rest. Whatever in general is necessary for a purpose that cannot wait may be attended to without blame. The same is true of reasonable recreation, and innocent and moderate amusements. While the nature of the day is kept in mind, and provision is made for attendance to our religious duties, reasonable amusement is not incompatible with Sunday observance. Amusement surely is not labour, and when kept within proper limits is not an infrigement of the law, nor opposed

to the spirit of it: "For the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath" (Mark ii, 27).

But while moderate amusement, which is really but rest for the mind and a help to enable us to bear the burden of life, and the wear and tear of a busy, or possibly a monotonous existence, is not opposed to the Commandment, and is entirely in keeping with the spirit of the Gospel, it is otherwise with public entertainments that attract large concourses of people, and occasion much excitement and commotion. Such entertainments are in direct opposition to Sunday rest, and incompatible with the sanctification of the day which the Third Commandment enjoins. The race-course, the theatre, the picture-house—much more distracting than ordinary transactions of buying and selling which the Sunday observance forbids—cannot be reconciled with the dedication of Sunday to the worship of God, and are therefore forbidden by the Third Commandment.

CHAPTER XXV.

The Fourth Commandment.

"*Honour thy father and thy mother.*"

The Commandments in their order but unfold to us the measure of the blessings given by the Almighty when He promulgated this code of laws for the guidance of man's life on earth. One special merit, if one may so say, of this code is that it follows so

faithfully and supports so admirably the instincts of our own better nature, as they suggest the line of action suitable to us in the more important relations and situations of life. Hence, having declared the law as to our duties to God Himself in the first three Commandments, in the next—the fourth—He defines our obligations to those who, after God, are most closely allied to us, and to whom, after Him we are most deeply indebted, i.e., our parents.

And here we may recall the difference in the obligation arising from the Commandments and that which comes from the dictates of nature, when both converge upon the same subject matter. Sense, or reason, or natural instinct, only in grave cases urges with the force of moral obligation binding in conscience. To violate the Commandments in every case is sinful. And this is the value of, and the reason for them at all, viz., they make clear to every mind the urgency of the demands of nature in every case where a Commandment applies. The subject matter of the Commandments we can well understand, then, is never a mere matter of expediency or convenience, as in the case of civil laws. They do not command because it is advisable for a certain end or purpose. They command because it is a duty to do what they lay down. What the Commandments apply to, lies at the roots of human nature and what must hold good and be respected if nature in us is not to be cheated of its purpose and frustrated in its aims. And as human nature in its higher and better instincts demands rule and discipline to bring the rude uncultivated strivings of our animal inclinations and passions to regularity and

order, without the stern application of the moral law contained in the Commandments we can never reach the perfection to which our higher nature aims. Just as only by science and law is savage nature tamed by the husbandman, and fertility and beauty introduced into the country side, and as only by discipline is the animal trained to obey man's will and become servicable for his purposes, so, only by the rules laid down in the Commandments, which are so perfectly adapted to us, can we reach that condition of moral excellence and perfection that we are capable of attaining and that it is our duty to attain. We can see at once, e.g., the refining influence of fidelity to our duties to our Creator. The idea of God, and the wish to honour and worship Him, subdues and chastens us. What but a drear and desolate waste, with nothing to elevate or improve, lies before one who recognizes no obligations to God at all. And if in other matters one becomes a law unto himself, following his lower instincts, he will quickly cease to be the same, becoming a much inferior person. And so Almighty God, anxious for our moral progress and perfection, made known on Sinai the rules that lead up to it, and made the application of these rules a precept binding on us for all time.

Now the Fourth of these is, " Honour thy father and thy mother." This command obliges to much more than obedience to those whom nature has placed over us, and rightly so. There is no relation known in our experience comparable to that which binds us to our parents. It is a relation of natual dependence originating not in our own free choice, or due to accidental outside circumstances. We find ourselves in

our parents'hands, placed there by nature and dependent upon them by a law to which they, as we, are equally subject. They have to support and keep us, and they do it in obedience to an impulse which makes their service a duty and a pleasure. Their sympathy and devotion to us spring neither from reason nor education, are, in fact, a function of nature, and they follow us with these sentiments through all the years of life. Originating from them, under God, we owe our existence to them; we can therefore never regard them but with attachment, devotion, love. Others there may be to whom is due a higher sort of reverence, but the devotion due to parents has no parallel, for it springs from nature—is nature's growth.

In the animal world, nature supplies the requisite affection that binds the offspring to the parent and the parent to the offspring. A kindred feeling is in man heightened by the idea of experience and religion, which point out the worth and importance for the present life and for the future of every child born into this world. Hence, charged with such a trust, it is the parents' duty, not alone to supply the corporal nourishment and conditions generally, according to their circumstances, requisite for the health and comfort and development of the powers of mind and body of the child, but as the years pass on, to educate or provide facilities for his education so as to prepare him for a position in life in keeping with the rank they occupy themselves. It is at least an equally important duty,if not much more, to teach the child the truths of religion, and according to its age to awaken in it a sense of duty towards God, and a love of virtue. To help the child in the full range

of his faculties and aspirations, to form the mind and heart to the practice of religion and virtue, and to call out and encourage a genuine appreciation of these in the young and receptive mind, is the highest and most urgent duty of parentage. It is a proverb: "a young man according to his way, even when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Prov. xxii, 6). In view of the fact that only a virtuous life is pleasing to God, and that only such a life leads to man's final destiny and is in keeping with man's own higher aspirations—"If thou wilt enter into life keep the Commandments,"—to plant the seeds of virtue in the mind of the child, and to train him in the practice of it, is a grievous obligation of a parent. Then habits thus formed in childhood will be first in possession, and will help to make easy and pleasing the practices and usages of a virtuous life, and will make vice and evil ways hateful and repellant. The condition of entire dependence of the child on his parents, and his own utter inexperience of the difference in fact and in effect between what is good and what is bad, make it clear at once how urgent the duty of parents to train their child to virtue, to teach him what dangers to be avoided, and so place him at the first opening of his powers and at the outset of his conscious life, on the secure road of virtue and right living. The absolute confidence of the child in the devotion of his parents to him, coupled with the parental authority he recognizes in them, and finally the subtle influence of natural likeness in disposition and character, all on the side of the parent, make up a power for good over the future of the child that, if used with assiduity and care, is morally certain in its results.

No authority is so commanding, no word is so persuasive, no example so attractive and so convincing, as those of the parent. In after years there are no recollections of life so stimulating and encouraging as the memory of those early practices by which the mother, or may be the father, would mould the awakening faculties of childhood to the ways of religion and virtue. This early attention becomes modified with time, but ceases only when the son or daughter, having come to maturity, enters upon an independent career of their own. The relations may now, or after a while come to be reversed and the child oftentimes is called upon to pay back on the waning powers of the parent, the attention and care originally bestowed by them upon himself. This indeed may be a debt of nature, but if so it is a duty which the Fourth Commandment lays upon us, and enforces.

Relations such as these, so singular, so intimate, and entailing so grave responsibilities on the part of the parent, can result only in duties correspondingly intimate, imperative, and serious on the part of the child. And first, and before all else there is the duty of love. The mutual relations between parent and child are not the cold and formal relations of superior and subject. They are founded upon nature and spring from it. And if there is very much of an identity of feeling, disposition, and character between the two it is due to the fact that one is the immediate descendant of the other. And if " every animal loves its kind, " as the Proverb has it, that is never so true as in the case where the one owes its being to the other. It is the love of the parents that enables them to make willing sacrifices for their child-

ren's welfare, and regard it all no more than a pleasing duty. The love of the child, if not so strong, must be also active and beneficent. Reason as well as sentiment makes the wants of a parent a necessary claim upon the child. And the law of Christ which reduces all precepts to the one great law of charity, binding mankind to their Creator, and to one another (Matt. xxii, 40), recognizes the claims of a parent on the services and attention of their children as a privileged claim (Matt. xv, 4, 7), and indifference to them an outrage on nature. And surely nature must be worn out when the springs of love towards parents become relaxed in the hearts of their children (2 Tim iii, 2).

To pay honour and respect to their parents on all occasions is an equally urgent duty of children. Not the tribute of the heart alone but of the mind as well, is to be given to those who are above us by a superiority of nature, because we have descended from them. And as honour is paid on the ground of superiority of what kind soever, to honour their parents is a debt of nature which children owe to them. Besides the interest parents have in the welfare of their children, and the constant desire they feel to see them happy, and the sacrifices they make or are prepared to make to procure their happiness, create in the mind of the children the duty to recognize these feelings, and suitably to acknowledge them. Hence in the ordinary conduct of life is a child ever to pay honour and respect to his parents, and in its greater issues there should be no overlooking their views and sentiments. To consult and take counsel with them is not alone becoming and appropriate, but where it is felt they can give advice it is a

matter of duty. "Honour thy father and thy mother that thou may live a long time, and it may be well with thee in the land which the Lord thy God will give thee" (Exod. xx, 12; Deut. v, 16). "Harken to thy father that begot thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old" (Prov. xxiii, 22).

To obey parents is the first duty a child learns. Devoid of all knowledge it learns by obedience, and the compulsory service of childhood but grows into the reasonable obedience of its awakening faculties as years advance. Nor can one hardly ever outgrow one's duty to one's first masters in this respect. The onerous duties of parents towards their children, which in nature and reason invest them with authority and control over them, impose upon the children the duty of unquestioning obedience and docility. The authority of the parents seems to have no bounds except those imposed by some higher law of God to which they have to pay deference. But in the absence of such law it would seem that the part of the child is ever to do the will of its parents, whenever that is definitely expressed to him. In the ordinary relations of life superiors exact so much of those subject to them—the smooth working of society can be secured on no other terms, and in a world that has to create authority for its own welfare and progress, and insists on unquestioning obedience to its rules, the first and fundamental relations of men to each other—that is the family relations, have to give the pattern and exemplar in this particular. And this was the example which the great Teacher and the Model Child gave to the world. Though naturally above His parents, and free from the obligations of laws that were instituted for

ordinary men, He was pleased to show honour, obedience, and love to them, and for the thirty years of His private life His whole history is summed up in the one sentence: " He went down to Nazareth and was subject to them."

Teachers and masters who exercise important functions in reference to the young, who are their superiors in knowledge, and are over them in authority, have to be regarded with respect, and treated with every mark of deference and honour. Theirs is a great responsibility, for the future of those entrusted to them is largely as they have helped to enlighten, to train and mould them. Obedience, respect, and honour, are due to them from their puplis. Success in their efforts is conditioned on such dispositions on the part of their pupils. Young persons apprenticed to a trade are entitled in justice to humane and sympathetic treatment and to instruction and practice in their business according to their capacity and progress. It is a duty of their masters to safeguard their moral and religious interests, and if lodged with them they are as wards committed to their guardianship. They owe their masters a willing and responsive obedience. Respect and obedience are due to all who hold any position of authority over us, whether in public or private life. " Let every soul be subject to higher powers, for there is no power but from God " (Rom. xiii, 1). And though public authority can enforce obedience the Apostles would have us subject " not only for wrath but also for conscience sake " (Rom xiii). Public authority, however, to be entitled to obedience must be legitimate, not forced on a people from without, but the choice of the people

themselves or accepted by them for their own welfare and progress. And St. Peter does not forget to say: "Servants be subject to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle but also to the froward" (2 Pet. ii, 19). Being hired for their labour, they owe it to their masters to be faithful in the discharge of the duties committed to them. They on the other hand, are entitled to respect and consideration from their employers, and to every facility for the discharge of their religious duties. By subordination the separate elements of creation are bound into one vast harmonious system, the result of which is seen in the life and activities of each part, and in the imposing splendour of the whole. So would the Creator have men coalesce into organized associations, whether private as families, or public as nations; rule and authority with answering subjection, and obedience, eventuating in the progress and happiness of each and all. There is no progress without order, no happiness without obedience. Order and obedience are the law of God.

CHAPTER XXVI.

The Fifth Commandment.

"Thou shalt not kill" (Exodus. xx).

The object of this Commandment is to preserve for man his highest and greatest good—his life, by forbidding the destruction of it: "Thou shalt not kill."

In this connection it is significant that while God in the beginning gave man absolute mastery over the goods of the world around him—made the world, in fact, and provided it with every requisite for his use, and gave him sovereign rights over all things therein—"to rule over the fishes of the sea and the fowls of the air, and all living creatures that were upon the earth" (Gen. i, 26)—He gave him no authority over himself. Rather it must be said, God made the world for man, and man for Himself, i.e., to know and to serve Him during his life upon earth. The history of God's dealings with man from beginning to end makes it clear that He reserved to Himself ownership over him, and that the end of man's life, as the beginning of it, is altogether in His hands. The early history of the race furnishes evidence of this. When Cain slew his brother God comes at once on the scene demanding an account of his deed from the culprit, and pronounced a curse upon him for his crime: "Cursed shalt thou be upon the earth which hath opened her mouth and received the blood of thy brother at thy hand" (Gen. iv, 11), and He added: "When thou shalt till it, it shall not yield to thee its fruit: a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be upon the earth." The

crime of fratricide indeed was an aggravation of the guilt of Cain, but it was only an aggravation, and for the murder of his brother he was made a vagabond and an outcast to be shunned by men, and shrinking as if by instinct from the society of men. Nor need this surprise us. In every crime there is something to repel: but to take human life is an outrage which nature instinctively abhors.

Compared with life, all else that men value is of small account, and to preserve it we are ready for any sacrifice It is not alone our highest and greatest good, it is the foundation on which all other goods rest, and from which they derive their value to us. All that we are and have, as well as our usefulness to ourselves and others, are based upon our life, and we cling to it with a tenacity that has become a proverb. No injury to a man is to be compared with taking away his life—no injury is so irreparable. And because it is so entirely irreparable only He who gave it can by right take it away. Again, what our Lord said, speaking of the loss of the soul: " What shall a man give in exchange for his soul " (Mark viii, 37), may with equal truth be said of his life. Once taken away neither can it be restored again, nor can any equivalent be given in exchange for it. And since we do not even in death die altogether " *Non omnis morior* " since the soul survives eternally afterwards, to send a soul prematurely and suddenly into eternity is to decide its lot for ever. The wrong done in this respect by taking away human life, one's own life or another's, is simply above our estimation, and the gravity of the crime involved in such an act is equally inestimable.

" As God is the Author and sole Owner of man's life, without His express permission one cannot shorten, any more than take away, one's own life or the life of another; that is, one cannot directly aim at ending or anticipating the natural termination of one's own life or the life of anyone else. Suffering, misfortune, shame, may make life a trial hard to bear, but such visitations, while they take away the happiness naturally associated with living, do not transfer to us dominion over our continued existence, which remains under all conditions in the undisturbed possession of God. It is another question to hold oneself indifferent to the anticipation of the natural approach of death that may result from a course of life dedicated to some useful or necessary service. It is heroism to attend a leper hospital to help to mitigate the sufferings of the victims of that terrible disease, even though we are morally certain of going to an early grave as a consequence of our charity. To earn a living one may engage in a trade calculated in the long run to undermine one's health and bring about a shortening of the natural span of life. In the interest of discovery or the advance of useful knowledge one may risk the jungle or the polar sea, and end a blameless victim of a heroic enterprise and spirit. And so for virtue's sake may one face the desert of the Fathers or the Carthusian Monastery, and devote one's life to the holy exercises of penance and prayer, though one's death may be thereby accelerated somewhat. And while it is a question if penance shortens life at all, in all the cases just mentioned and others of a like nature, death if it comes is never sought directly; rather it is warded off by every safeguard, and when threatening, is fought against by the best efforts of

enlightened science, and if in spite of all it claims a victim, such life sacrificed on the altar of charity or science is more than compensated for by the many lives that it helped to prolong, or saved altogether, and that but for its devotion would have long since succumbed a victim of disease, neglect, or ignorance: "Unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, itself remaineth alone. But if it die it bringeth forth much fruit" (John xii, 24, 25).

What has so far been stated in reference to the life of ordinary persons enjoying their own separate existence is equally true of child-life even before birth. The yet unborn babe in the mother's womb has already everything that goes to constitute the inestimable worth of human life, an immortal soul, an earthly career already marked out for it in the designs of Providence, and an eternal destiny. To destroy that life is not to annihilate a soul, but to mar its career and to change its lot for ever. It is already created a living image of God, designed to occupy a place with God's angels when its life on earth is over. All this is frustrated before it is even born if by unfailing care it is not brought safely into life. Purposely to destroy it is murder unqualified even if secret. To intervene adversely, or to obstruct the course of nature at any stage in this grave matter is to destroy human life in every instance, and a crime of the greatest enormity. "To prevent birth is anticipated homicide" (Tertullian). A humane civilization would call the destruction of human life indirectly. brought about in certain cases, concealment of birth. To give it its proper name one must call it murder.

On this point the teaching of the Church is both explicit and uniform, nor does she hesitate to inflict the gravest penalties in anyone directly instrumental in inflicting fatal injury on even a yet unborn infant. The laws of every Christian sect are at one with the Church in this matter, and a just and enlightened public opinion reprobates those who are found guilty of so cruel a deed. In nothing is the value of Our Saviour's life and teaching so strikingly made manifest as in the view everywhere prevailing throughout the Christian world in reference to the worth of human life. And if an unnatural sefishness that would evade the burden of infant care, or the weight of a numerous family, is made to realize the superior worth of each individual soul and each individual life, and extend to each a scrupulous attention, we owe it to His teaching. And if the indifference of pagan people to child life is held in abhorrence among Christians ; and if on the other hand the advance on pagan practices of an irreligious and self-indigent age is openly reprobated by the Church, it is due to the teaching of Him who would have " Children, come to Him, for such is the Kingdom of God " (Luke xviii. 16).

" You have heard that it was said to them of old Thou shalt not kill ; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment. Bnt I say to you, whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment" (Matt. v, 21, 22). In this way Our Lord improved upon the prescriptions of the Old Law, extending to much greater length the observation of the New. In the Old Law, of course, anger, as the source of murder was forbidden also ; but it is the spirit

of the Gospel to go directly to the heart and remove from there all dangerous feeling from which criminal actions derive their origin. And we can easily recognize that the most effective preventative of the unjust taking of human life is the elimination of all feelings of anger or resentment from the mind and heart. To cherish angry feeling, then, is against the spirit of the Gospel, and an open violation of the Fifth Commandment. And though anger as a rule falls far short of meditating anything approaching the taking of human life or inflicting serious injury on an offending person, the tendency of anger is to seek revenge, and much evil is generated by the process of seeking it. Hence the duty of moderating anger, and so dismantling the outworks from which a fatal assault may be precipitated. Indeed all feelings of anger, of revenge and hatred are in direct opposition to the spirit of the Gospel, which is a spirit of universal brotherhood and mutual forbearance and charity. And whatever might have been permitted under the Old Dispensation in the matter of seeking redress in case of injury "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" (Matt v, 38), is repealed by the law that insists on forgiveness of injuries, and makes forgiveness the condition on which we may hope for pardon of our sins. "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them who trespass against us," is not a counsel of perfection but a moral obligation. "Seek not revenge, nor be mindful of the injury of thy citizens," was the exhortation given the Jews (Lev. xix, 18). It is an urgent duty of the Christian. And whatever rendering of the ancient legislation may have grown up in the course of ages among the Jews,

by amending the law in these and other particulars, as He did in the Sermon on the Mount, Our Saviour would mark His appearance before the world as a moral and religious Teacher and Legislator.

What, then, of war, which involves wholesale destruction of life and property? Is war always and necessarily sinful? Strange as it may appear in view of the principles just laid down, and the definite prohibition of the Fifth Commandment, there is such a thing as a just war, and to engage in it is lawful. A nation, having exhausted all means of peaceful settlement, when the possessions or the just rights of its citizens are threatened, is at liberty to go to war in defence of those, even though many lives will be sacrificed and untold misery and suffering will ensue. Examples from Holy Scripture make this position certain, and saintly rulers, without sacrifice of their holiness, in both Testaments, have had to take part in war. At times it is the only means remaining of frustrating wicked and unscrupulous designs, and preventing greater evils. In such cases it is but a scourge in the hands of God, by which men are punished for their sins and virtue is vindicated. When a country is engaged in just war, it is a duty of citizenship and patriotism to take up arms. The state also may punish murder by death. For by such extreme measures only can the wicked be restrained and innocent lives protected. One is also at liberty to take the life of an unjust assailant when it is the only way left of defending one's own life. But if by disarming him, or any less fatal injury, one can escape the hands of an assassin, one is not at liberty to employ the extreme measure of taking his life;

that is, it is lawful to repel force by force, using all prudent restraint lest the bounds of right be overstepped. For, at all hazards human life must be spared; so jealously has God in His own keeping the boundaries of a man's life.

So far as to killing in the obvious and ordinary meaning of the term, and in the sense directly intended by the Author of the Commandments. But there is killing of another sort, which, if not so obvious, is real also and fatal to its victim, i.e., the killing, not of the body, but of the spirit—not of the natural life of a person, but of the supernatural life of the soul. This is what is called scandal, which consists, in its most pronounced form, in inducing others to commit grievous sin. As grievous sin deprives the soul of sanctifying grace, and cuts us off from the source from which grace flows out upon us, to induce another to commit grievous sin is to destroy the supernatural life of the soul. This, the most pronounced and obvious form of scandal, takes place for instance, when, by wiles, solicitation, or promises, one induces another to the commission of any sort of crime, such as robbery, murder, or anything else forbidden. One is guilty of scandal, also, though offering no encouragement to any particular sin, who furnishes the occasion on which sins are usually committed. To circulate bad literature, to exhibit bad pictures, to paint up suggestive situations; to furnish, in short, the occasions on which ordinary corrupt or weak human nature is liable to fall into sin, is to be guilty of grievous scandal. All pandering to the lower passions of our sinful nature, no matter how expressed; whether the appeal is through the sight,

or hearing, or the touch ; to which, or how many of the senses—is scandal. There is hardly anything that shows so great forgetfulness of the higher and better interests of men, is so prejudicial to these interests, and is so opposed to the spirit of universal charity which it is the aim of the Gospel to set up in the hearts of all men, than proceedings of this nature. Hence did our Saviour declaim against scandal in such unmeasured language, and declared it were better for a man never to be born, or that he was cast into the bottom of the sea, than to give scandal to one individual soul. "He that shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe to the world because of scandals" (Matt. xviii, 6, 7).

Somewhat similar to scandal in its effect upon others is bad example. And though ordinarily, persons who give bad example do not advert to the effects of their conduct on other people, and seldom, if ever, desire to be imitated, they can hardly escape responsibility for such imitation. The moral tone of any community is the result of practices introduced by individuals in the first instance. Creatures of imitation as we are, we are influenced by what takes place around us. And as a lowering of the moral tone or standing of a community or an individual invariably attends on open violations of the moral law, persons guilty of such violations cannot hold themselves innocent if people copy their example. The force of example is proverbial; and though we cannot easily define the measure of responsibility for the

deliberate deeds of another, it is enough to make men pause before bringing into open day a course of action that "makes not for edification but for destruction" (2 Cor. x, 8). "*Trahet sua quemque voluptas*" says St. Augustine. It is not by compulsion people are induced to do anything; rather by appealing to their interest or pleasure or convenience they are got to act. And with a nature so prone to evil as ours, and so easily affected by the seductive ways of the senses, one must be cautious not to add to the difficulties that beset the ways of virtue, or to help a weak brother to his own destruction.

CHAPTER XXVII.

The Sixth Commandment.

"*Thou shalt not commit adultery.*"

In none of the Commandments is there a greater correspondence between what the Commandment enjoins and what reason and sense dictate than in this, in many respects the most important of the Commandments that have reference to our neighbour. Nor is there a question upon which men in every state of society, civilized or otherwise, are so agreed upon as on what is here forbidden. Nor again, is there anything for which the offender is pursued with such unqualified and unsparing censure. In the Jewish law, violation of

this Commandment was punishable by death. "If any man commit adultery with the wife of another and defile his neighbour's wife, let him be put to death, both the adulterer and the adultreess" (Lev. xx, 10). The code of morals among some savage tribes exacts a like penalty. And we can well imagine how the natural sense of man could fail to find adequate satisfaction in a less atonement.

In the words of the Commandment, only the most flagrant form of a violation of chastity is forbidden—"Thou shalt not commit adultery." But under this prohibition is included every sin against this virtue—the worst form of the crime including under itself every minor trangression that leads up to it, as to its final culmination. Nor is this peculiar to the Sixth Commandment. Each Commandment fastens upon what is chief in its own special category. In the Fourth, we are ordered to honour and obey our parents, implying that we are to honour in their measure all superiors also. In the Fifth we are forbidden to take another's life, which implies that all other bad feelings, as well as all less serious and personal injuries to our neighbour, are forbidden likewise. So in this Commandment, when adultery is prohibited, all less serious violations of chastity are forbidden with it. And as there is no dishonour greater, no injury to personal dignity and character so hopelessly, irretrievably ruinous as the stain of this crime, not it alone but everything that tends to it is to be shunned and guarded against like a death-dealing plague. Odious and degrading in the esteem of men, sinful and criminal in the sight of God, is adultery and whatever tends to it.

A special feature of this crime is that the honour and dignity of the human species as a whole, is compromised when it is committed. To the wise and ordered institution of marriage would God restrict the source from which men derive their origin. Any serious violation of the sanctity of this divinely instituted fount of human life, while prejudicial to the legitimacy of the individual, is a blot on the honour of the race. At marriage the contracting parties bind themselves in the most public and solemn manner to absolute fidelity to each other as long as death does not interfere to break their union. As far as it is possible for two persons to be one, husband and wife are one from the hour of their marriage. "Wherefore," said the Father of the race, "a man shall leave father and mother and cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh" (Gen. ii, 24), and "Therefore," said Our Lord, "now they are not two, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder" (Matt. xix, 6). Now, no more disrupting hand can be placed upon this divinely compacted union —a union by which man and woman are made one— than by the crime we are dealing with. It is precisely the one thing that would dissolve that union were it not made indissoluble beforehand. And hence is this outrage which the Sixth Commandment most expressly forbids, not merely a private wrong, if a secret crime, but an injury striking at the integrity of the race at its very source. And because such is its effect, was it shut out and precluded by the institution of marriage by the Almighty from the first.

Our Lord confirmed this institution in its every

feature, only making it more indissoluble, and adding to it a sacredness it had not up to His day, by raising the marriage contract to the rank of a Sacrament. From that onwards the violation of the essential obligations of this contract between Christians has something of the nature of a sacrilege.

Then, since at the beginning of the world marriage with its special features and provisions was introduced by Almighty God, as a means of propagating the race in a manner in keeping with its dignity, all intercourse which marriage alone makes lawful is wrong, and forbidden in the case of unmarried people. The progress or the degeneracy of the race is here at once at stake. And while even with the safeguards attaching to it, youthful impulse rather than the dictates of a prudent and foreseeing judgment, decides in many cases the momentous question of marriage to the prejudice of so many of the vital interests that group around it, these are altogether sacrificed whenever unlawful intercourse takes place. And while the Scriptures abound in instructive examples to tell the evils attendant on unlicensed conduct between unmarried persons, and Our Saviour ever mentioned such intercourse among the gravest kinds of sin, the sense of mankind condemns with righteous indignation all such liberties between unmarried people. Persons with little faith, and with as little or less morality, who have lost hold of the first great guiding principles in which religion instructs us in these matters, may have another gospel more pleasing to man's lower passions and may not blush to preach it, but the moral sense of all men in all ages of the world everywhere stands by the

doctrine here advanced in accordance with the divine institution of marriage. The Church in teaching the priceless treasure of chastity, and urging us to go to all lengths to bring up the young, both men and maidens, in love and esteem of it, as the most valuable possession of life, has the same sanction and support. "How beautiful is the chaste generation with glory" (Wisd. iv, 1), is a truth that men of all ranks and of every faith subscribe to. The Vestal Virgins of early pagan Rome, were the expression of this idea amongst a people far removed from Christian times and teaching, and from any divine institution from which to borrow it. And though marriage was the highest, because a religious ambition, on account of the hope of the Saviour among the Jews, the sanctuaries around the second temple for the careful upbringing of Jewish maidens, teach us what the ideas of that people were as to the chastity of their daughters. Only, however, with the advent of her whom all ages have called the "Blessed Virgin," and who, in her day, rising above the traditional ideas of her race, consecrated in her early youth her life to God in the observance of virginal chastity, was the value of this beautiful virtue, so fruitful in blessed results, brought home to the world. By her vow of virginity, unconsciously, she laid the foundations of her future greatness, and if mankind co-operated with the Creator in the work of its own redemption, it did so because she appeared before the future Saviour as not unfit to be His Mother, because a Virgin. Having none but a Virgin for His Mother, His life was a profession of chastity, and His teaching accounts a chaste life of value only when that life is the outward

manifestation of a chaste and pure heart. Chastity he would have the badge of His priesthood. Such only would stand at His altars as could offer with pure hands the chaste victim of our Sacrifice. And if His priests can go out over the earth unencumbered with family ties, carrying His Gospel to the heathen, and can face at home or abroad every danger their mission implies, with an easy mind, the spring of their power is their life of chastity. With this they have access to every Catholic home, and they receive the confidences of young and old alike with assured trust, because of the detachment their chastity gives them.

Then look at those Virgin daughters of Sion, the Sisterhoods of the Catholic Church. They go abroad over the world—defenceless women, but with a power and grace that is recognized everywhere. As their Prototype stood unconcerned and not without respect in the midst of the Roman soldiers and an unfriendly rabble beside the Cross, her chaste daughters, whether abroad in the missionary field or at home as they move among the people, bent on their errands of charity for the lowly and sorrowful, receive from savage or unbeliever, as from their own Catholic people, a reverence and respect which is paid only to such virtue as theirs. Hence there is in a chaste life a virtue and power you find in nothing else. If we would secure for ourselves the power and ability to do great things, we must be chaste. Every thought or desire, consciously entertained and approved, that is opposed to chastity, is bad, and robs us of our best gift and our greatest source of strength. It is so with every unchaste word, and so with every unchaste deed. Such things may

give a passing pleasure to our lower nature, but it is a pleasure dearly bought. They leave a wound behind that is not cured easily. The depressed mind, and the gnawing at the heart, the complaints of nature under cruel wrong, tell how not outward deeds only, but words and thoughts opposed to chastity and forbidden by the Sixth Commandment should be banned from the lives of enlightened Christians. And this all the more for here precisely is the battle-ground of the warring elements of our complex nature. With characteristic insight, St. Paul clears up the situation for us where he says: "For I am delighted with the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members fighting against the law of my mind, and captivating me in the law of sin that is in my members" (Rom. vii, 22, 23). Here is a menace ever within ourselves to that chastity our better nature approves so well. To second in any way the action of this law of our members is on the face of it to help towards our own undoing. Nor need anyone complain of the difficulty of living a chaste life, who goes freely into such occasions as make chastity impossible. Evil-spoken companions, solitary companionship of young persons, undisciplined curiosity of the senses or imagination, doubtful or suggestive pictures or readings, and an intemperate use of food or drink, are all practically certain occasions of sins against the Sixth Commandment. If we are to give ourselves a fair chance then, we must be careful to avoid these, and everything of a like nature that stimulates the passions. On the other hand to live a chaste life is, while avoiding every dangerous situation, to seek the victory of virtue where St. Paul says we shall find it, "in

the grace of God by Jesus Christ Our Lord " (Rom. vii, 25). Long before Him the Wise Man said: " as I knew that I could not otherwise be continent, except God gave it, and this also was a point of wisdom to know whose gift it was, I went to the Lord and besought Him " (Wisd. viii, 21). Prudence in recognizing danger, and sense in avoiding it; love of a chaste life, and humble prayer to God and to Our Blessed Lady for the necessary help, and the use of the other aids to virtue which the Church supplies will secure for all what grace is requisite to enable them, despite every difficulty, to observe the Sixth Commandment. We have evidence of this in the lives of ordinary Catholics. And if they have succeeded, and succeed so generally, as even public records attest, in living up to the standard of this Commandment, it is not that human nature is less vitiated in them than in others, but that recognizing their needs, and taking the necessary precautions " they go with confidence to the throne of grace: that they may obtain mercy and find grace in seasonable aid " (Hebr. iv, 16) and find it. The training and education they receive when young has its share in such results also. With the instincts of nature on the side of the teacher—of nature that endows all her children with such deep sense of modesty from earliest consciousness, it is easy to plant the seeds of virtue in ground so carefully fenced around as the virgin heart of youth. And as untended outside nature yields but rank growths of all sorts, and flowers and fruit are the reward of the skill and care of the husbandman, so the heart of man with its animal, as its better tendencies demands the enlightened attention of the moral, and the spiritual

cultivator. The parent and the teacher must here employ their best arts of training, and instruction. The spiritual purpose and destiny of each individual must be impressed upon the youthful mind. The importance and superiority of the soul above the body is to be taught and inculcated, and the duty of holding every lower tendency in due control, and bending the whole corporal nature to the service of the mind and spirit. One prepared in such wise for the battle of life is sure enough to become a pattern for imitation, will show what dignity the observance of the Sixth Commandment can add to life in any sphere, and how it is possible, not to say easy, to observe it.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

The Seventh Commandment.

"*Thou shalt not steal.*"

In the Fifth and Sixth Commandments, as we have seen, the law is laid down, defining our duty in reference to our neighbour's greatest personal possessions, viz., his life and his virtue. The Seventh prescribes our duty regarding his outside possessions—his property. The words of the Commandment are few and explicit, but of wide significance: "Thou shalt not steal," it says; and we may well say it could hardly be expressed more

tersely, nor could more be well included under so few words.

It is remarkable how much this short precept contains. On the threshold of the subject it contains the much-discussed question of "private ownership." The accepted meaning of "to steal" is, to appropriate the property of another against his consent. If we must pass by another's property, then, and dare not turn it to our use without his permission, he has a right over it which others have not, and a right which others dare not violate under penalty of breaking the Seventh Commandment. Now He who said: "Thou shalt not steal", is the same who gave the wide world to mankind for their habitation, and gave its goods to them for their inheritance. And though He did not define how they were to come into actual possession of them, He proclaimed from Sinai that no one is at liberty to take what another has already made his own.

And surely there is nothing more in keeping with common sense, nor indeed was it ever brought into question before these anomalous times! Of course while there is plenty for all to take, no one waits to question another's title to what he has already made his own. But when there comes a shortage, and nothing remains for late comers, if there is no equivalent, and while a man's right to live is a stronger right than another's right to his superfluous means, one is free to help himself out of pressing want from another's hoardings. Everyone is agreed on this. This, however, is not the question. The question is, is it against the wish of the Creator, who gave the world at large to mankind, that some should parcel out its goods among themselves, leaving

nothing for others? If that "nothing" means no equivalent, we come back again to the point already settled. But granting an equivalent—granting, that is, a means of living to all—is private ownership of land, or of the fruits of the earth, and we will add, of the fruits of industry, against the mind of God? If it were, the Seventh Commandment would never have a place in the Decalogue. The world hardly ever had a doubt on this point up to the present day. The whole system of law in every organized state everywhere, at every period of history, recognized private ownership, and government, of what form soever, was set up everywhere on purpose to secure to each subject undisturbed security in his possessions and unassailable right over the management and use of his private property. There is no fact better known than this. The classical writer's ideal of earthly happiness was that the Roman citizen should sit secure under the shade of his own beech tree from the summer sun. The Church has ever recognized and defended private ownership. Her ministers, from the highest to the lowest, have exercised it; and when in recent years the matter was called in question, the great Pontiff, Leo XIII, in his famous Encyclical Letter, "*Rerum Novarum*", discussed the whole matter at length, and may be said to have decided the question once for all in favour of private ownership. "Private possession is a right given to man by nature," declared the Pontiff. The question is definitely settled. The Seventh Commandment, indeed, decided it long ago. And before it was promulgated men acted upon the understanding of private ownership, as they have acted upon it ever since.

It is useful, however, to recall here that the circumstances of the Hebrew people at the time the Commandments were given to them, and for years afterwards, gave a daily application to this Commandment. They lived then in the desert—an inhospitable land. But though a whole nation, God did not see them wanting whereof to eat. Every morning as they rose they found the face of the desert covered over with Manna that fell from Heaven during the night, for their support. It lay broadcast over the desert waste, waiting for the hand of man to collect it before the rising sun. It was surely common property as it lay scattered abroad over the face of the desert. It was there for all. But it fell within the tent of no man. Each had to go abroad to gather what sufficed for his household. " Let every man gather of it as much as enough to eat " (Exod. xvi, 16). And lest anyone overtaken with sloth and failing to rise betimes should claim the fruits of another's labour, there was the Seventh Commandment. Each had to collect of what came for all, what sufficed for the day for the support of his family " according to the number of your souls that dwell in a tent, so shall you take of it " (Exod. xvi, 16). And just as long before this in the Patriarchal days, when the dependants of Abraham and Lot quarrelled over the pastures used in common for the flocks of their masters, Abraham, for peace, gave his choice portion of what they occupied so far in common to Lot for his sole use, and took the remaining portion himself, so the Children of Israel, during the forty years of their wanderings over the desert, took each, of the Manna that came for all, what each required for his household, and invoked, if need be, the Seventh Commandment

against the indolent and dishonest who may have failed to provide each morning for his own and his family's requirements.

We find this fact further emphasized in the subsequent history of this divinely favoured people, when, after their many years in the desert they came at last to the Promised Land. How did they come to occupy it? It was divided out among the Tribes, each Tribe receiving the portion that came to it by lot; and each Tribe came into actual possession by their families: "And he cast lots before the Lord in Silo, and divided the land to the Children of Israel into seven parts; and first came up the lot of the Children of Benjamin by their families, to possess the land between Juda and the Children of Joseph" (Josue xviii, 10, 11). It is the same in the case of every Tribe: "The sixth lot came out to the sons of Nephtali by their families" (Josue xix, 32). The land then came into actual occupation by being divided among the Tribes, and each Tribe occupied its portion by subdivision among the families. "But to the Tribe of Levi he gave no possession, because the Lord, the God of Israel is their possession" (Josue xiii, 14). But he gave them an equivalent: "All the first fruits of the sanctuary which the Children of Irsael offer to the Lord I have given to thee, and to thy sons and daughters by a perpetual ordinance" (Num. xviii, 19), said the Lord to Aaron. Here surely we may apply the words of St. Paul though written in another connection: "all these things have happened to them in figure; and they are written for our correction" (1 Cor. x, 11), or as the Latin has it, "*ad nostram doctrinam*"—for our instruction. Now, whatever may be said about the

Manna which was consumed by daily use, or of the wise suggestion of Abraham as an example, the division of a whole territory among the people of a nation, and the actual possession of the nation through the families, and this not the device of man, but the work of God, tell us of actual ownership, and that actual ownership comes by the individual and not by the nation or state.

In organized society there are various recognized ways of acquiring ownership. But whether property is acquired by personal labour, e.g., working at a trade, or by invention, or by contract : as buying and selling, or what way soever—once the person becomes the legitimate owner of anything no one can deprive him of his ownership without his consent. The Seventh Commandment stands by him here, and but endorses the feeling that is universal among men. Sometimes, indeed, one has to yield a reluctant consent to parting with his property in the interest of public utility or convenience. The state may for such an end oblige a man to part with his property, but in doing so it exercises no prior superior rights of its own over the man's possessions. Nor indeed, can it compel him to part with it without powers expressly granted by the legislature, which is supposed to represent the will of the people, and the will of the man in question, with the others. But even then the ownership of the subject is recognized, and a full equivalent is paid by the government for what he yields to public exigency. " The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof " (Psalm xxiii), and He who made it and furnished it with such abundance of manifold wealth handed it over to man " to till it and subjugate it to

his use" (Gen.), giving him the condition involved in such labour, viz., private ownership.

Our Lord in His day recognized private ownership. Many of His parables refer to wealthy owners of vineyards or estates or other property (Matt. xviii). He mixed freely with the rich as with the poor, and one time He told a wealthy young man to sell what he had, and to come and follow Him (Luke xviii). And while He thus tacitly recognized the ownership such men possessed, He never made the least suggestion against the legitimacy or the validity of their title. On the other hand He held out the greatest rewards to those who for His sake should voluntarily surrender their possessions. "Everyone that hath left house or brethren . . . . or lands for My sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall possess life everlasting" (Matt. xix, 29).

To take what belongs to another, then, without his permission, is forbidden by the Seventh Commandment. The title on which men hold what they possess, whether inheritance, production, or purchase, binds it to them in a way that makes it theirs against all comers. There is a tie between a man and his possessions that does not exist between him and what is not his at all. And what is theirs in this way men refuse to cede to others ordinarily except for equivalent value received. In every interchange of goods or property this is the understanding. If, then, one knowingly passes off inferior value for a price beyond the due, the transaction is so far dishonest. There is nothing given in exchange for the surplus price. It is unjust to take it. It is equally unjust to keep it. It is taking so much of our neighbour's property against his consent. It is directly against the Seventh Commandment.

Nor can one avail of the innocence or the ignorance of a person selling, when, for want of knowledge of the value of his goods he is prepared to part with them for less than the current price. Price is the exchange for goods. It is their equivalent in value. To avail of the owner's innocence or ignorance to get them below their actual worth according to the common estimation, is unfair, dishonest, unjust. Recognizing, therefore, each man's independence in the matter of his possessions and the unwillingness of each to yield his rights over them to others, except in exchange for the full equivalent, the Seventh Commandment aims at securing to each person his own, and so establishing, as far as possible, a reign of justice among men. Hence, when one lends to another, or does not claim at once the price of what he sells, all such debts have to be paid, and paid according to the terms agreed upon when the contract was entered into. Similarly when one hires another for his labour, or makes a contract for a certain work, both parties are bound by their agreement ; the one to carry out the work, the other to pay the settled price. Here, however, difficulties often arise which cannot easily be adjusted. Broadly speaking, a worker, of what class soever, is entitled in justice to the value of his labour, according to the prevailing standards. And while an employer may not avail of the necessities of a worker to take his honest service for less than it is worth in the labour market of the place—the current price—neither is the worker at liberty to do less for his hire than the standard amount of work. For this is the matter of the contract, and to do less than one is understood to do is to act so far unjustly. But outside these extremes there

is room for the play of many forces. And while exact justice is hardly attainable, because unascertainable, in very complex matters only a spirit of equity and charity can adjust men's differences and secure the harmony and good feeling which contributes so to the happiness of life. This is especially true of the larger industries, which afford small opportunity for the many personal services which servant and master can mutually render to each other in daily intercourse. In Ireland especially, where the Patriarchal and Christian virtues flourished among Catholic neighbours, and families, rich and poor, through the country, were bound to each other in many cases by traditional devotion and faithful intercommunication of charities and services, it would be a deplorable loss if cast-iron systems of work and pay should supplant and replace these kindly virtues in the hearts of the people. Here, too, where the conditions are peculiar, where the labour is general and time broken up, and where the weather is a large factor in determining opportunities and results, the moral qualities of honesty and fidelity to the interest of his employer, on the part of the workman, count for most. An appreciation of the value of these qualities, and a disposition to foster and encourage them, on the part of employers, will contribute most to establish and maintain friendly relations in an agricultural community. Where such conditions flourish and are inspired, moreover, by Christian sentiment, the question of wages is easily settled.

On the other hand when it is question not of masters and servant, but of capital and labour, of employer and employed, it must be remembered that while capital is

not necessarily obliged to employ labour, or engage in industry at all, labour, or the working man, cannot live without employment. It is the interest of labour, therefore, to be friendly towards capital. Working is but carrying out or undergoing the sentence passed on mankind from the beginning: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread"; and whether or not, labour is an inevitable condition affecting mankind at large. But if that condition holds, the principle of equitable retribution for the labour men are condemned to, must hold also. The produce of a man's labour, then, is equal to his maintenance—is able to maintain him. His labour is the means assigned by the Creator for that end. The minimum daily wage of the average working man, therefore, is what it takes to support him according to the requirements of his position, i.e., as a working man who is, too, the head of a family; for by the inevitableness of nature this is his destiny. Given the requisite conditions, then, of willingness to work which is according to the law of Providence, and the ordinary favourable opportunity of working, the average man is capable of producing by labour what will decently keep him, and he is entitled to as much in justice from anyone that employs him. His labour, indeed, must be worth more, else what claim upon another to employ him at all.

But when through favouring circumstances, and the co-operation of faithful workers, an industry comes to flourish, and an employer grows rich, the first charge in equity on such riches are the hands who helped to make it. According to the measure of their co-operation, from the highest to the least efficient worker in the employment, every man has contributed his part in

turning out the goods that brought back so great profits. Hence, even though a man has to work to support himself, if another is greatly enriched by the profits of his labour, it is but simple equity to make him, to some extent at any rate, a sharer in such profits. The value of the labour employed is the price of the finished goods, less what is due to capital and the necessary provision for deterioration, etc. The profits of the industry are the only ascertainable test of the value of the capital employed, and of the labour put into operation by it. And when the reasonable demands of the capital which created the industry are fully satisfied, and provision for future contingencies is reasonably secured, equity, if not justice, requires that the other factors in the general success should be attended to, and their claims favourably considered. But their claims are at the best founded on equity, and by no means on justice. For the success of an industry is due to the state of the markets and labour contributes nothing to the prices that rule in these. Nor does there, on the other hand, seem any ground in justice for a wage an industry does not earn.

The method adopted by organized labour in recent years for settling disputes, that of the "strike," seems to have little to recommend it. It is a wasteful method, and eventuates in hardships that are felt far beyond the range of the parties immediately concerned. On the other hand it is deplorable to find men dependent on the work of their hands for their support, compelled to fall back upon questionable means of this kind to force what they require from employers, who are possibly more interested in the amount of their profits than in the condition of the workers, whose labour makes these profits possible.

But whether or not, when industrial disputes threaten, and the parties concerned are not in the best position to compose their differences, it is the duty of the State in the interests of the community to take the necessary steps to effect a settlement. "Whenever the general interest or the interest of any particular class suffers or is threatened with mischief which can be met in no other way, the public authority must step in to deal with it (Leo XIII, Rer. Nov.) It is the duty of Government to safeguard and promote the well-being of the people. It is their office, therefore, by means of competent tribunals furnished with the requisite powers, to deal decisively with all questions which intimately affect the public welfare, as in the case of industrial disputes; and on the basis of justice to secure, as far as possible, the rights of all parties, mindful "that justice exalteth a nation" (Prov. xiv, 34), and that the happiness of the people is based on no other foundation.

Outside all such cases of disputed or doubtful rights, whenever justice is manifestly violated, the offending party is bound to make restitution to the full extent of the injury. Whatever one holds that belongs to another must be restored, or made good in equivalent value. Nor are the demands of justice satisfied as long as the resulting injury is not compensated to the full. For one has an inviolable right to his own, in itself if it exists: if it does not, to its equivalent in value, while the damage sustained by being deprived of one's property demands adequate reparation. The implements of his trade, e.g., if stolen, must be restored to a tradesman, and the wages lost during enforced idleness made good, if the unjust injury is to be fully repaired. Hence, too, one can take

hold of his own property wherever he finds it, and when this cannot be done openly one is free to take it secretly, for it is ever his as long as he has not surrendered it voluntarily to another. And just as a workman is bound in justice to give his honest labour for the hire agreed upon with his employer, so a person in a position of trust at a salary is bound in justice to attend to the interests confided to his care, according to the understanding come to when he entered on his office. Nor is he at liberty to appropriate, or turn to his own use any share of the profits—how great soever these—as long as this has not entered into the terms of his agreement. Ordinarily, one is not at liberty to make use of the property of another without his presumed consent. Nor is this lightly to be presumed in any case, and where risk is involved, seldom, or never. To speculate with the money of another is wrong, and in case of loss the injury to the owner must be fully repaired. The Seventh Commandment is the guardian of justice, but its benefits have a wider range. To observe it is an exercise in self-discipline of inestimable value; it is to promote praiseworthy self-dependence, to foster enterprise and useful and honourable industry. Petty thefts even of children from their parents are forbidden by this Commandment; and though of course less sinful in the case of children, because of the less rigid opposition of the parents, the practice of such theft is to be checked if for no other reason than the injurious effects on disposition and character that follow. The independence of every one, in the goods of fortune as of nature, ought ever to be remembered, and a clear grasp of this principle will decide in most cases what our duty to our neighbour

demands in the matter of his property or goods. For the general good, the law of the land may modify the exercise of our rights in certain specified instances, but no law can repeal the principle that comes from nature, that has originated with the Author of nature, and is expressed in the simple but inexorable formula "to every one his own", which is safeguarded by the Seventh Commandment.

CHAPTER XXIX.

The Eighth Commandment.

"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour" (Exod. xx).

The Eighth Commandment, which is expressed in these words, treats of what men value even above riches, viz., their good name, and forbids us to injure our neighbour in respect to it. Though the words of the Commandment seem to have a wider application, in practice it will be found, that a false accusation made against another implies an injury to his character or reputation. Nor indeed does there seem any reason for thinking this Commandment would be given at all, except that a false allegation involved injury to the name of the person concerned. But when one's character is injured by the false statement of another, much evil is indeed perpetrated. "A good name is better than great riches" (Prov. xxii), and secures for us before men what wealth

cannot purchase. Hence are people so jealous about their reputation, and feel so much when anything is said that casts a shadow over it. This love of our good name which is common to all men is an evidence of the innate appreciation of virtue which is so natural to the human heart. And when one, conscious of his own respect for any particular virtue, and that the practice of it enters into his life, finds that an imputation is put upon him in reference to it, his displeasure is great because of his sense of the wrong so unjustly done him. But whether one discovers or not that someone has defamed him, the wrong of such defamation is patent to everyone. It is not alone that what has been said is not true, but the effect of saying it is to deprive him of the appreciation in which he is held by those who know him. Hardly can a greater injury be done another than this! A man stands in the minds of others exactly as his name and character represent him. It is not by one's physical features or characteristics so much a person is known to his acquaintances. Such is a man to those who know him as is his character and name. To those who know him best his physical appearance almost passes out of thought, and he is known and remembered for the virtues, and, let us add, for the vices, that notably mark his life. And though a false accusation may not deprive a good man wholly of his reputation, just as to take something that belongs to another will not make that person poor, such false accusation injures his good name. But whether or no, a man's name and reputation are his own, and there is no excuse for another to come in to injure or destroy them. And if this is done as we here suppose by a false allegation—

by bearing false witness against him—we easily realize how great a wrong and how criminal such accusation is. According, of course, to the gravity of the charge is the gravity of the guilt. But it is clear to every mind that to allege against another what is at once untrue and defamatory is in direct contradiction, not to truth alone, but to that charity which every Christian is supposed to cherish towards "all men, but especially towards those who are of the household of the faith" (Gal. vi, 10). The injury done by such false allegations is greater or less according to the position and standing of the person concerned. One expects much more from a person of high social standing or position than from one in a humble station; from a man of recognized character and office than from a thoughtless and inexperienced youth. But as we are never at liberty to speak what is false of another, and as everyone is jealous of his own good name, we must be ever careful neither by thoughtless gossip, and this especially—nor by conscious defamation, to say what is injurious to the good name of another. And this holds good even when what we say is true—so inviolable is one's good name. Hence, though a person may have done something prejudicial to his own reputation, as long as it is not commonly known, no one is at liberty to spread abroad the knowledge of it among other people. And the reason for this is manifest. One can so easily fall, and a fall is often so much worse in appearance than in reality; it would be entirely unfair, therefore, by free and irresponsible gossip to circulate abroad a lapse that was due perhaps more to sudden impulse, or to some other contributory circumstance, than to any real losing of one's love for,

and devotion to virtue. To cover over with charitable silence a solitary or temporary lapse of a good man is to give him an opportunity of recovering himself. To save such a one from public and often unmerciful censure by silence is a duty at once of justice and charity. If the lapse, however, is a matter of common knowledge, as his reputation is now gone, it is not injured by further speaking.

To speak what is false of another in such a way as to injure his reputation, and which by a special name is called calumny, is the worst form of bearing false witness against a neighbour. This of its nature is sinful, and in no conceivable circumstance can it possibly be lawful. It involves, of course, the duty of reparation. If what is said is true, but calculated to lower or destroy one's good name, while a less grievous sin generally, it is almost always sinful, and is known as detraction. To save an unsuspecting person in possible danger, or some such reasonable cause alone will excuse the making known the secret faults of another. Rarely however, if at all, is one bound to stand sponsor for another's name if the detractor will not keep silent.

If what is said is merely untrue, not involving any special injury to anyone but to the speaker, it is called a lie. Now a lie, no less than those forms of uncharitable speaking which involve injury to our neighbour, is forbidden by the Eighth Commandment. To tell a lie is to say the opposite to what we think. This, though usually not a grievous sin, is certainly a deordination, and a perversion of the use and purpose of speech. The power of speech is the special faculty of intelligent beings, and is given on purpose to enable us to communicate

to others the thoughts of our mind. These thoughts we express in words; and the sole purpose of words is to convey to others what we think. Now, it may not be of special interest or advantage to anyone in any particular instance to know what is in the mind of a speaker—whether he tells what, or the opposite to what, he thinks. But rare instances like this excepted, it certainly would destroy the harmonious working of society and neutralize the end and purpose of speech if men habitually were not obliged to say what they think, and to express to others the truth as it is known to them. To tell a lie then is to act against the ordinance of nature, and to turn a faculty given by the Author of nature to the opposite of what it was intended for. And this is what people commonly understand.

In ordinary intercourse, and for the conduct of the business of life, we are largely dependent on the information as to particulars we have to seek from others. General knowledge and general principles that enlighten the mind and enhance its capacity we derive from reading, observation, and reflection. Information as to the facts of every-day life we have to seek from others when not possessed by ourselves. And as we are constituted so by nature, there comes with nature the duty to supply to those who require it at our hands, the information in detail they lack themselves. There is no obligation of charity or honour to furnish idle information to one who seeks it. And not rarely it may happen that the information sought, while unnecessary to the inquirer, may involve considerable injury to some one else if thoughtlessly disclosed. It may be, indeed, that the duty of charity to other people may bind us

strictly to withhold information imprudently sought for. It may be awkward, too, to ourselves or others to answer questionings that arise as much or more from unrestrained self-love or idle curiosity than from a genuine desire for serviceable knowledge. In these and similar circumstances while the ground on which an answer may be expected in the sense of the inquiry is wanting, we may and often must make economy of truth, and answer as best we can without betraying an important trust. Here, to equivocate is not only lawful but may be even obligatory. And just as no one is bound to betray himself, and may lawfully plead not guilty, casting on his inquirer the burden of discovery, so may we deny the guilt of another whose defamation would be the chief or only result of imprudent candour. In general, where one has no right to inquire there is no obligation to give the information sought, and short of giving offence one may shape one's answer in distinctly ambiguous terms. Outside of cases such as these, in which our duty to others or our own convenience or just interest demands it, we are bound to speak the truth without equivocation or reserve. This we owe to truth: this much is due to our own character: this much is due to our neighbour and to society at large from all men. By lying and deceit was man's ruin brought about at first. Our Lord identifies lying with the devil: "When he speaketh a lie he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar and the father thereof" (John viii, 44). "Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord" (Prov xii, 22), and the Royal Prophet prayed to be delivered from a deceitful tongue (Ps. cxix). In the Scripture writings there is nothing brought so strongly in evidence as the value God attaches to truth.

He is called the God of Truth (Ps. xxx). By His divine Son truth came to the World (John i). He proclaimed Himself the Truth, and the Holy Ghost the Spirit of Truth. Lying, which the Eighth Commandment forbids, is the opposite to this ; and we may say, if God forbade various forms of evil under one or other of the Commandments, He forbade lying because in a special way it is opposed to Himself and what He stands for, viz., the Eternal and Everlasting Truth.

When it is evident, however, that a speaker is not in earnest and is talking rather from imagination than according to facts for the sake of entertaining or amusing his hearers, no one will accuse him of lying. The natural effect of lying is deception, and where the intention to deceive is absent a speaker may well be acquitted of blame for the mistakes an inexperienced listener may fall into because of a too literal interpretation of his meaning. As evil is almost always to be sought for in the mind rather than in outward actions and words when the purpose of a speaker is harmless who describes an amusing situation or invents some entertaining incidents, he is to be ranked rather with writers of fiction, or as a poetic or figurative speaker than one to be censured as breaking the Eighth Commandment. And just as amusing fiction involves no departure from truth, so a well founded opinion, though prejudicial to another's name, is not to be regarded as sinful. Only when despite the recognized slenderness of his grounds one will still persist in adversely judging his neighbour, is such judgment unwarranted, uncharitable, and sinful. If however we would keep the Eighth Commandment in the spirit as in the letter, we should act on the

advice of St. Paul, to "speak evil of no man" (Tit. iii, 2), and remember what he says in another place, "Charity thinketh no evil" (Cor. xiii, 5).

CHAPTER XXX.

The Ninth and Tenth Commandments.

The Ninth and Tenth Commandments, though treating of widely different subjects, because they regard them under the same aspect, can be dealt with in the same category; what is said in the one case is equally applicable in the other. Both Commandments refer to the same subject matter as the Sixth and Seventh respectively, viz., the violation of chastity and justice, but whereas the earlier Commandments dealt with action in reference to these matters, these latter treat of thoughts concerning them. The special significance of these two last of the Commandments of God is this, that they teach us that the acts of the mind, no less than outward acts of the body, have their moral character, and are subject to moral rules and principles like what men say and do. They tell us that the law of God, like "the Word of God is living and effectual . . . reaching into the division of the soul and the spirit, and is a discoverer of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. iv, 12). Nor indeed is there any special difficulty in understanding

why the law of God should not be heard in the inward courts of the mind any more than the outside world of observation and action. Words and actions derive their moral character—are good or bad—according to what they are engaged upon. To take the money of another, in the light of morals as in every light, is a very different thing from taking our own money. To make the same action the subject of thought, and definitely to decide to do it, is to come to a decision of the same moral character and complexion as the act of doing it. "Whosoever" says Our Lord, "shall look upon a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Matt. v, 28). But we must notice here that thoughts are not always as fully subject to our control as what we say and do. We say no word, we do no deed, without deciding previously upon it. Thoughts on the contrary, flow in upon us like the sunlight from all quarters: nor can we keep them out at all times even if we would. But as we are not always capable of choosing what we think, and as unwelcome things occur at times in every mind, it is a comfort to know that we bear no responsibility for what is in our mind as long as we withhold consent from it. For besides the faculty of thinking we have the faculty of willing also; and while our faculty of thinking is open to every image like a mirror, only such thoughts as we choose to dwell upon deliberately by the free decision of the will, carry with them the responsibility of the thinker. Now, when we realize what we are thinking of, not in its physical nature only but in its moral character also, and we recognize that it is not suitable for thought—is forbidden

by one or other of the Commandments—and we continue, nevertheless, to dwell upon it, the thinking now is wilful, the complacency is wilful, and the whole process is sinful. Within the sanctuary of the mind in the clear light of thought, with the faculties of the soul in active exercise, one makes deliberate choice of his own will and pleasure against the law of God. Here assuredly is sin. The will deliberately embraces a sinful object, decides upon a sinful purpose, or takes complacency in a sinful thought. Our thoughts, or the action of our mind, take their colouring from their objects, and the decision or complacency that results from these thoughts, the will consenting as the mind suggests, are of the same moral nature as these objects. They cannot in fact be anything else. "To lust after a woman is to commit adultery in the heart." To consent to steal is stealing in the mind. Hence as outward sinful actions are forbidden by one or other of the Commandments, so are inward sinful acts of the mind forbidden also. There are special Commandments in reference to thoughts against chastity and justice, not indeed because these are the only sinful thoughts we are liable to, but because these occur more frequently, and the danger of yielding to them is greater. These stir up the passions as no others do. And what with the confusing of the mind and the inclining of the will towards their objects which the passions bring about, only one trained to virtue and helped by grace will remain faithful to duty when these thoughts present themselves. Every thought against chastity, as well as the thought of coveting our neighbour's wife, is forbidden by the Ninth Commandment, just as every

thought tending to the injury of our neighbour's property, as well as the desire to have it altogether, is forbidden by the Tenth Commandment. And as our thoughts assume the nature of their objects when these raise any qualifying circumstances, distinguishing them from others of their kind, sinful thoughts in reference to them take on these qualifications. The sin for which St. John the Baptist reprehended Herod, who had taken the wife of his brother, was more grievous than if she were the wife of another man. So too, were his thoughts when contemplating this wicked deed. Deliberate complacency in sinful thoughts is always sinful, and as often as these thoughts die out, or are broken off, and complacency is indulged again, so often is the sin multiplied. A sinful purpose is more long-lived, nor is it often multiplied unless the sinful purpose was definitely given up and taken on again.

Sinful thoughts are more to be controlled that even sinful deeds or words. These carry their own condemnation with them, and we readily shrink from them. Thoughts are different—they escape the senses and leave no unpleasant visible mark behind them. But by care and prayer we can discipline ourselves to virtue, and grace will readily help the will that turns from sinful thoughts.

Following the Commandments one by one, and noticing the subjects dealt with under each of them, we find that the full circle of our duty is comprised within them. To keep them in heart and mind, as in outward observance, is to fulfil the law of God. They teach our duty to Him and to our neighbour, and to respect these duties and fulfil them is to live in

a manner worthy of human nature at its best—to improve and perfect it in ourselves. And as the end and purpose of the Commandments is to raise men up to a befitting level of virtue by properly ordered living, we should consider well these Commandments, esteem them for their worth and purpose, and observe them in the spirit as in the letter. Our Lord tells us though *ten* in number, they may be reduced to *two*—to the love of God and of our neighbour ; and as love makes everything easy, we may well strive to love God, who for His goodness gave us these rules to live by for our good, and our neighbour who is the object of so much interest to Him, and whose best and greatest gifts He safeguarded by so many of these Commandments. To keep them, however, we must do more : we must seek the help of grace—" Without Me," says Christ, " you can do nothing." But with His help, sought by daily prayer and other devout practices, we can effectually resist every assault of passion, and living within the Commandments, merit God's favour in life and eternal happiness hereafter. " If thou wilt enter into life, keep the Commandments " (Matt. xix, 17).

CHAPTER XXXI.

The Six Precepts of the Church.

The First Precept.

Together with the Ten Commandments, Almighty God gave to Moses on Mount Sinai laws relating to the civil and religious life of the Jewish people. He gave him a system of civil jurisprudence ready made, to regulate the relations and dealings of the people with each other in all civil matters. He gave him also laws relating to religion. In fact God instituted the Jewish religion on Sinai, prescribing the materials of worship, the times and seasons to be kept holy, the rites and ceremonies to be observed. He also instituted the priesthood that was to minister to Him. One peculiarity of the religious system of the Jews was that it was a preparation for the better religion of Christ, and its rites a type of the more sacred and availing worship with which He would endow His Church. "All things happened to them in figure" (1 Cor. x). But in any case, every religious system, like every system or institution designed for men, has its own special observances, nor can these continue to hold their place in the life and practice of the people unless enforced by appropriate laws and sanctions. Hence the Church, to which Christ entrusted His religion together with the Gospel, has its laws in reference to religion and the practices and observances required of the Faithful. Now while the essentials of worship remain unchanged, the accidentals may

vary with time and place and the conditions generally of the life of the people. And hence too, as in a commonwealth or state, while you have what is called common or constitutional law which is subject to little or no change, you have various statutes which are the outcome of changing times and changing circumstances. So in the Church of Christ. Besides the many and changing regulations enacted for the whole Church or any part of it, regarding less essential practices, there are the great fundamental laws that apply to the body of the Faithful everywhere, concerning the essential religious observances which are characteristic of the Church, and are of necessary observance by all its members. These are what are known as the Precepts of the Church—six in all. And the wonder is, not that there are *six* Precepts binding on all the Faithful, but that there are only *six*. And what is more striking still is this, that these Precepts are but subsidiary laws, giving precision as to circumstances of time and place, which were not definitely prescribed, in laws already laid down for us by Our Lord Himself. Three out of the Six Precepts refer to the Sacraments. Now the Sacraments were instituted by Our Saviour as channels of grace to be used by the Faithful. But while He laid it down definitely enough that they were to be received, He nowhere defined expressly the time and circumstances of their reception. This is what the Church does in three of her Precepts, defining when and where the Holy Eucharist is to be received ; how often the Sacrament of Penance ; and to whom, and under what conditions Matrimony is to be administered. No one is surprised that in the Church of God there is a law as to

the attendance of the Faithful at divine worship. This is the subject matter of the First Precept. The next is concerned with the practice which of all others is in keeping with the spirit of the Gospel,viz., the practice of moderation and self-denial in the use of food. This is the matter of the Second Precept. And finally there is a point which too received attention from Our Saviour, viz., that religion and its ministers should be a charge on the people to whom they minister. This is dealt with under the Fifth Precept.

Now as to the First Precept, which is: " To hear Mass on Sundays and all Holidays of obligation."

When treating of the Third Commandment of God we saw at how early a date Sunday was already the day kept holy under the law of Christ. Among the Jewish converts a difficulty might have been experienced in reconciling themselves at first to the change from the Sabbath. But the break with the Jewish religion was vital, and the Sabbath came to be merged in the Christian observance of Sunday as an integral part and an outward profession of the new and better religion and faith. But it is noticeable that when the Church spread out beyond the borders of Judea, and the Faithful were gathered from among the Pagan peoples, to whom the Apostles preached the Gospel, the Sunday observance was introduced amongst them too as a necessary religious practice (Acts. xx; 1, Cor. xvi). The observance of a day each week for the purpose of devotion could not but entail awkward consequences among a people the majority of whom had never known such a usage. Yet we have it from the records of the very first days of the Church, that the first day of the week was

sacred to religion, and no word seems to have been raised against it on the ground of the difficulties it entailed—no one questioned then that a fixed day each week was to be kept holy. The Faithful were taught to come together on that day to attend at the religious services, a special feature of which was the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. From this fact, Sunday, the day of religious meetings, came to be called the Lord's day, and in the beginning it was the custom that all who assisted at Mass received Holy Communion. "Every Sunday of the Lord, having assembled together, break bread and give thanks, having confessed your sins that your sacrifice be pure." This is found in the book called "The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles,"—after the Gospel the oldest record of these times extant. St. Ignatius, Martyr, writing A.D. 107, says: "Come, together all of you as to one Temple of God, to one Altar, to one Jesus Christ," and he speaks in his letters, of Sunday as already the Christian holy day. St. Justin, A.D. 150, writes: "On the day called of the sun, an assembly in one place is made of all who live in the towns and in the country, and each one receives a distribution and share of the Eucharist." Now, whether attendance at these religious gatherings on Sunday at which the Blessed Eucharist was solemnized and the Faithful were accustomed to receive Holy Communion, was simply a custom that had grown up from the day of Pentecost, to which everyone coming to the Faith was supposed to conform, or was a duty laid down by the discipline of these times, does not matter much. The custom existed, anyway, from the time of the Apostles: and the converts, whether in Asia or Europe,

whether Jews or Gentiles, were taught to be present at the Sunday services in which the celebration of the Eucharist was the distinctive feature. A practice of this kind, prevailing everywhere throughout the Church, soon acquires the force of law, and in the absence of any special enactment the custom itself becomes law for the people. The urgency of this practice very soon became manifest; opposition and persecution dogged the footsteps of the Apostles. It was the lot of their followers also. Paganism was challenged by the new doctrines of the Christians, and in self-defence it invoked the secular arm to put down the new teaching and its adherents. In these circumstances meetings in public places for religious purposes became impossible for the Christians. But they assembled, nevertheless; and whether in the Catacombs of Rome, or in the private houses of the most notable of the Faithful, they gathered to assist at the celebration of the Sacred Mysteries on the Lord's Day. When persecution ceased, or became less active, the Faithful attended their religious meetings everywhere, and *pari passu* with the Faith went the practice of hearing Mass on the Lord's Day. The sacredness of the Mass and the purpose which it was instituted to serve, viz., as a public sacrifice to God, carried with it the sense of obligation on the part of all believers, of assisting at it on the day devoted to Divine Worship. Hence wherever the Church has penetrated, the practice on the part of the Faithful of being present at the celebration of Mass on the day devoted to religion, not as a matter of devotion but of simple duty, has prevailed at all times. Then, is not attendance at Mass on Sunday the ordinary way open to Catholics of making public

profession of the Faith. And because of the nature of the Sacrifice of the Mass, commemorative and otherwise, and its efficacy in obtaining the blessings of Heaven, what could the Church do, charged as it is with the spiritual interests of the Faithful, but to make attendance at the celebration of Mass on the Lord's day a necessary and imperative duty. A practice that can be traced back to Apostolic times, that has lived through the stress and trials of centuries, that is a public profession of faith, and a fruitful source of grace and blessings, was, surely, most appropriately, the subject matter of the First Precept of the Church when the time came for making the distinctive religious practices of the Faithful a matter of public law. However the Precept may have been expressed in the earlier ages, and we can trace it back to the sixth cenury at any rate, for many centuries now it is worded in the terms stated above, and the faithful observance of it has at all times, and in every place been regarded as an essential duty for every Catholic.

And as laws are binding on every member of the community for which they are enacted, the duty of hearing Mass on Sundays is obligatory on every member of the Catholic Church. The young, indeed, who on account of age are incapable of appreciating the force of a Precept or its purpose, are not bound by this law. As soon, however, as they begin to understand, the duty of hearing Mass begins to come upon them, and parents are obliged to see that they attend, that they come to know their duty of attending, as well as what the Mass is, to whom, and for what purpose, it is offered. On the other hand the infirmities begotten of delicacy

or old age, as well as the urgency of some duty of charity or business, are accounted sufficing reasons for exemption from the obligation of hearing Mass on Sunday, on the principle that a personal obligation that is morally impossible of fulfilment ceases for the time to be an obligation. A difficulty or inconvenience less valid than the above will not excuse one from hearing Mass on Sunday. The obligation which comes from the law of nature, of joining in the public worship of God, and the wonderful means which the Mass affords of satisfying that duty, suggest that when the Church, which guides us here with divine authority and light, calls us to Mass on Sunday, it is incumbent on us to see to it that less urgent matters yield place to this sacred duty. In this light the hearing of Mass on Sunday was always regarded in the Church. And the Roman Catacombs and the Irish glens witness, that not for spiritual comfort and strength to bear their trials for the Faith only, but from a sense of duty, Catholics, disregarding difficulties, were ever ready to make sacrifices so as to be present at Mass on Sunday. Provision, therefore, must be made that business and family convenience be so adjusted that every grown member of a Catholic household shall have full opportunity of satisfying this important religious duty every Sunday. Though the precept is substantially fulfilled by being present at Mass, the manner of assisting at the celebration is an element in our obligation. Outward observance, of course, is necessary in the case of every precept, but when it is a question of being present at divine worship, in which the materials of the worship, as the object of it, are so wholly sacred, the mind and heart must enter

into our part as much at least as our physical presence. "God is a spirit, and they that adore Him must adore Him in spirit and in truth" (John iv, 24). If we would fulfil this law in the spirit as it is intended we should, as in the letter, and gain the benefit to be gained by being present at Mass, we must be careful to assist at it with becoming attention and devotion. Nor do we satisfy our obligation by being present for the essential parts of the celebration. The Mass means the whole rite that surrounds the Holy Sacrifice. To this we are summoned. To be absent from a substantial part of it is to fail substantially in fulfilling our obligation. This, if due to negligence, or some trivial cause, is a grievous sin. For the obligation to hear Mass on Sunday is a grievous obligation.

The practice of holding festivals in honour of the Saints, and the great mysteries of religion, goes back to the first ages of the Church. The Jews were obliged by the law to keep the Passover, and Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles. The Romans celebrated the anniversaries of their dead. Usages like these in the communities from which the first Christians were drawn, made it easy when the anniversaries of the great mysteries of Faith or of great martyrs, such as the Apostles, came round, to honour them with religious festivities. In this way Pentecost and Easter and Christmas came to be great solemnities, the feast of SS. Peter and Paul on the anniversary of their martyrdom came to be held, and other like festivals. The number of such feast days varied at different times and in different places. But from the time of Pope Urban VIII, about the middle of the

seventeenth century, there has been more uniformity. Other Popes after his time reduced the number of Feasts to be kept all over the Church, until we come to the beginning of the last century, when the well-known holidays, added to Easter and Pentecost, which always fell on Sunday, only are of strict observance. Such holidays are to be kept as we keep Sundays. In busy centres, however, especially in countries of mixed religions, the practice has grown up of late years of allowing persons engaged in industries to attend their work on holidays, but the obligation of hearing Mass and the practice of hearing it remain unchanged. Nor indeed was this an unknown practice elsewhere at other times. In places where the number of holidays was considerable, holidays of partial observance were usual enough, as in France. The spirit of the Church ever inclines in the way of leniency towards her children. But the devout in every land and in every centre will always endeavour, in spite of difficulties, to honour the great mysteries and the Champions of the Faith on their special days, and with the liberty of the Gospel, will make free of labour, at least as far as is necessary so as to comply with their religious duties, the few days in the calender that are sacred to them.

There are other practices suitable for the sanctification of Sunday and kept holidays, which are, recommended by the Church, and in use where local circumstances are favourable. Evening devotions, with Benediction, are well-known customs in every centre of population. The reading of pious books, and family evening prayers, should mark in every household a

day that is made free of secular occupations and duties for the worship and honour of God, and to promote our own spiritual interests. But while such usages are eminently in keeping with the nature and purpose of religious days, and highly recommended to all the Faithful by the Church, they are not enforced upon us as an obligation, nor is neglect of them sinful. But whether or not the piety of the Faithful will ever encourage the observance of practices recommended to us by the Church that are helpful to us in the discharge of our duty of worship of God, and are calculated to stimulate effectually our fervour in His service. But above all these stands the obligation of attending the celebration of the Mass. To be present on Sunday when the Holy Sacrifice is offered is an essential duty of religion. To fail in this is not alone to violate a binding precept, but to absent oneself from the public worship which God requires to be paid to Him on the day devoted to worship. This is at once a serious matter, and consideration of our own interest apart, and what benefits we receive in taking part in this grand act of worship and joining in this public profession of faith, our sense of what is due to God should make it imperative on us at all times to be present on Sundays and Holidays, as the Church commands at the celebration of Mass. Her sense of the urgency of this duty is sufficiently evinced by the permission given to priests in populous or extensive parishes to say Mass a second time on Sundays and Holidays, so that every one in a Family might be able to hear Mass.

According to the New Code, Canon 1248, the following holidays of obligation are to be observed all over the

Church : Christmas Day, the feast of the Circumcision, the Epiphany, the Ascension of Our Lord, Corpus Christi, the Immaculate Conception, and the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, the feast of St. Joseph, SS. Peter and Paul, and All Saints. In Ireland, St. Patrick's Day (17th of March) is a holiday of obligation. Unless where a recognized custom prevails, or an Indult has been obtained from the Holy See releasing the Faithful in part or altogether from the observance of any of these holidays, they are to be kept in all respects as we keep Sundays (*New Code*, Canon 1268).

The Second Precept.

The Second Precept of the Church is : *To "fast and abstain on the days commanded."*

There is no practice more in keeping with the spirit of the Gospel than that enjoined by this precept. By exhortations to Penance, the Baptist prepared the people for the hearing of the Gospel. The Baptist's own life was a miracle of fasting and penance. Clothed in camels' hair and living on wild honey (Mark i, 6). he spent his young years in retirement from the companionship of men. By strict fast of forty days our Lord would begin His own public life, and secure the blessing of heaven upon His ministry. The first words He uttered, as recorded by St. Matthew (Ch. iv), were an exhortation to penance : " Do penance, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." The characteristic note of His teaching is self-denial—opposition to the strivings of a nature only too prone to self-indulgence. His own simple manner of life—a life devoid of every-

thing that makes for comfort—His journeyings on foot, His weariness from the road (John iv), His nights of prayer (Matt. xiv), after long addresses to the people, His spare and humble food, taken often in the open air with His disciples (John iv), all go to show that the spirit of His religion, like His own life, is a spirit of moderation and persevering self-discipline. A life such as His, with no fixed abode, and moving constantly from one place to another, was of its nature a penitential life, yet it did not lend itself too well to set penitential practices, for it was settled in nothing except in its general penitential character. Once, however, the Gospel was announced, and the message of salvation taken up by the Apostles had but to be repeated, a more settled manner of living, both for the Apostles themselves and their followers, and settled religious practices, became more possible. Now notably above all else with the practice of prayer, the practice of fasting was observed by the Apostles, and introduced by them among the Faithful. All the more important functions which they performed were accompanied with fasting, "Then they, fasting and praying, and imposing their hands upon then, sent them away" (Acts. xiii, 3). Fasting, indeed, seems to be a regular practice with the Apostles, for we read in the same place: "And as they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Ghost said to them" (Acts xiii, 2). Now when we remember the fervour of the early Christians, we can readily see how quickly a religious practice like this could become general among them, and with what facility special seasons for certain valid reasons proper to them, could be devoted to such religious

observances. In this way the forty days fast of Lent was introduced in preparation for the Easter solemnities. St. Leo, Pope, calls the Lenten fast of Apostolic origin, and St. Jerome in his Epistle "*ad Marcellum*" writes: "We fast one Lent by Apostolic tradition, the whole world agreeing with us." It may, it is true, be questioned if and how far the Apostles made the fast of Lent, or any fast, a matter of duty, the violation of which was a sin. But as early as the third century, and more expressly in the fourth, one easily finds in the decrees of Councils, as well as in the writings of the Fathers, express declarations of the sinfulness of violating the Lenten fast. St. Augustine in one of his sermons says: "To fast at other times is good and meritorious; not to fast in Lent is a sin." St. Basil, while saying there is no corner of the earth so remote in which this fast is not proclaimed, says: "Let no one exclude himself from the number of those who fast"; and St. Maximus of Turin, A.D. 450: "To neglect altogether the fast of Lent is a sacrilege; to transgress it in part is a sin." The principle underlying the practice of fasting is, that it is the most appropriate and effective corrective of the concupiscence in our nature which is such an occasion of sin to us. The Apostles in their writings called frequent attention to this defect in us, especially St Paul. In his Epistle to the Romans (Ch. vii) he says: "I see another law in my members fighting against the law of my mind, and captivating me in the law of sin." Now among other aids to our success in dealing with this trouble, they urged the practice of fasting and abstinence. A free indulgence, on the other hand, of the appetite for food, but stimu-

lates the passions and tends to unfit us for that life according to the spirit which all followers of Christ must strive after. "And they that are Christ's, have crucified their flesh with the vices and concupiscences" (Gal. v, 24). The ideal held up by St. Paul to his converts in Corinth is that of an athlete, who, to win in the race subjects himself to training and discipline: "every one that striveth for the mastery refraineth himself from all things, and they indeed that they may receive a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible one. I therefore so run not as at an uncertainty . . . . but I chastise my body and bring it into subjection" (1 Cor. ix, 25-27). But though the Apostles fasted rigorously, and urged the practice of fasting on their followers, fasting did not come into use for the first time with the Gospel. It was well known at all times among the Jews. A solemn fast of expiation to be observed each year was a part of the law (Lev. xvi). And either in satisfaction for their sins or as a means of averting the divine displeasure and of gaining God's favour, it was customary with them to resort to a religious fast. "I humbled my soul with fasting," says the Psalmist (xxxiv), and again he says: "My knees are weakened through fasting, and my flesh is changed for oil" (Ps. cviii, 24). Fasting was a usual practice with the Prophets and the Saints of Israel. And in all public calamities the people resorted to fasting to appease the divine displeasure. By taking up the fast preached by the prophet Jonas, the people of Nineveh saved their city from threatened destruction (Jonas iii), An observance such as this, and honoured moreover by the practice of her Founder, could

not fail to be favourably regarded by the Church, and to be imposed by her upon the Faithful, because salutary in itself, and so calculated to promote their religious interests. The Apostles, at any rate, could not fail to realize the unexampled worth of fasting as an aid to the success of their ministry. When they inquired one time why they could not expel the unclean spirit from a young man possessed, they were told by their Divine Master: "this kind can go out by nothing but by prayer and fasting" (Mark ix, 28). They had too in his manner of life a standing lesson on the worth of fasting. And when they recalled that only by a prolonged and severe fast would He inaugurate his public ministry, they could not but see that to dispense with such a practice, and not to introduce it into use among the Faithful, was to discard the most useful aid to the fruitfulness of their mission. Hence the tradition as to the abstemiousness of their lives. Hence would St. John request the Faithful of Asia to fast with him so as to secure special help for the writing of his Gospel. And whether they introduced or did not introduce the great fast of Lent, or any of the other fasts, which have been familiar to the Faithful from almost the first days of the Faith, they succeeded in impressing upon the Church a spirit and disposition friendly to fasting, which have made laws as to fasts and fasting seasons of easy acceptance by the Faithful during all the ages down to our time.

The fasts observed in the Church are: first, the solemn fast of Lent; second, the fast of Advent; third, the Quarter Tense fasts; fourth, the Vigils of the great festivals. All of these are in use for centuries. Lent

dates from Apostolic times. As it is known to history, the Lenten fast was very rigorous. It meant but one meal in the day, taken in the evening, and from which everything in the nature of flesh meat, and even white meats, such as milk and butter, were excluded. St. Gregory the Great, in his instruction to St. Augustine whom he had sent to convert the English, treating of Lent, says: "We abstain from flesh meat, and all things that come from flesh, as milk, cheese, and eggs." This was the practice of the Church to which the Pope wished Augustine to train His converts in England. St. Thomas, writing above six hundred years later, says: "On all fasting days the use of flesh meat is forbidden: in Lent eggs and white meats are also prohibited" (2, 2, Q. C. A. xi). About the time of this Saint, the custom of taking food about three o'clock came to be sanctioned. This practice of anticipating the hour for food led gradually to the introduction of the collation later in the evening. Next came permission to use milk and other white meats on fasting days. This practice, though in use in some places in the case of the other fasts, came to be allowed by the Holy See in Lent itself in some of the Northern countries of Europe, in which, on account of the climate, and the want of such fare as is available in warmer countries, milk and white meats are almost indispensable articles of food. Not, however, before the tenth century, was a dispensation given for the use of milk. After a time butter, in small quantity, came to be allowed. In the fourteenth century, permission began to be granted by the Holy See to special persons for the use of flesh meat on fasting days, but

so early as this it does not appear that such dispensation applied to the fast of Lent. During the sixteenth century, some Popes gave to certain individuals, for grave reasons of health, a dispensation to eat flesh meat in Lent. Pope Benedict XIV, in the middle of the eighteenth century, was the first who gave a dispensation to the Faithful generally for the use of meat in Lent on certain conditions. In Ireland, this dispensation does not seem to have been availed of generally down to the middle of the last century, for the custom of passing the whole Lent without flesh meat was strictly adhered to. Since the famine in 1847, the Irish Bishops, by permission of the Holy See, granted a dispensation for the use of flesh meat at the principal meal, every day in Lent except Wednesdays and Fridays, that is, the Benedictine permission for the use of flesh meat seems only then to have been made use of in Ireland, and from that date the practice is uniform all over the Church. The custom of using butter at the collation in Lent came into general use in Ireland towards the end of the last century on the petition of the Irish Bishops. Finally, Pope Pius X, at the petition of the Bishops also, removed the abstinence from meat at the principal meal on the second of two consecutive fast days in Ireland. Until the publication of the New Code of Canon Law ordered by this Pope, Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, and Spy Wednesday in some places, continued to be observed as fast days according to the full rigour of the primitive Lenten fast. Under the New Code white meats are allowed to all the Faithful even in these days, and with this permission

the last vestige of the primitive Lent, which continued without a change for fully 1,200 years, passed finally away and became a mere matter of history. Lent then, as observed at present is a fast on one meal, taken not before mid-day, at which flesh meat is allowed (except on the days of abstinence), and a collation not exceeding eight ounces. Together with these a very light refection not exceeding a couple of ounces, say of bread and jam, or some such thing, with tea or coffee is permitted on a fast day. This light meal, as well as the collation is recognized by the New Code for the whole Church; and besides, whichever of these light refections was taken in the evening may now be interchanged with the dinner should it be desired to take dinner at a late hour. About half as much again as that allowed at the Collation taken at one time, or in less quantities at different times outside the meals permitted, is considered a grave violation of the fast. Two ounces of flesh meat when meat is forbidden amounts to a grave violation.

At the Collation such food as was allowed by previous local custom in any place is permitted now under the New Code. Hence if butter was allowed previously, as in Ireland, it is now also permitted to those who fast. The quantity of food of all sorts, however, must not exceed eight ounces. Eggs, of course, are forbidden at the Collation. Nor is milk either at or outside it, except in small quantity, permitted to one who is bound to fast.

The days in Lent when meat is forbidden, i.e., the days of fast and abstinence, for abstinence is applied now to meat and soup only, are the Wednesdays and

Fridays in Ireland, and Fridays and Saturdays elsewhere. On Sundays and Holidays of Obligation there is now neither fast nor abstinence, Fish and flesh may be taken at the same meal on a fast day if meat is permitted: nor are eggs or white meats or dressings from the fat of animals a violation of abstinence, even on a Friday. Lent ceases at mid-day on Easter Saturday. Special permission to dispense from both fast and abstinence for a good reason in individual cases is granted by the New Code to bishops and priests for their subjects.

Who are supposed to fast and abstain? All who have completed their seventh year must abstain. Only those between the ages of twenty-one complete, and the beginning of sixty, unless they come within one or other of the classes to whom the law of fasting does not apply, must fast. There are three or four such classes of persons, and it may be said that for them, Lent or fasting does not exist at all. The first class comprises all who are engaged in laborious toil, or servile work properly so called. And just as notwithstanding the health and strength of a youth who has not yet completed his twenty-first year, or the vigour of a person who has begun his sixtieth, such persons are not included in the law of fasting: so all engaged in such occupations as are a genuine tax upon their strength, no matter what the nature of the occupation is, are free from the obligation of fasting. Sick and convalescent persons, whose principal concern is to regain health and strength, are equally exempt from the fast. Fasting in the case of the sick or delicate, apart from the danger to life it may involve, is quite

superfluous. For the chief aim of fasting, the mortification, viz., of the passions, is effectually secured by sickness or a delicate state of health. Then, where there is uncertainty as to exemption in any particular instance, the parish priest has power to dispense, and on applying to him one can always learn what is required in one's own particular case.

To persons not accustomed to practise self denial, the idea of fasting may be very repellant. And though in obedience to the spirit of the age the Church may have mitigated considerably the ancient rigour of her fasts, she does not hesitate to describe even the Lenten fast as "a salutary discipline, wisely introduced for the health of the body as well as of the soul (*Mass on Second Sunday in Lent.*

Until the publication of the New Code of Canon Law, like the fast of Lent in preparation for Easter, the fast of Advent in preparation for Christmas was observed all over the Church. The Advent fast, however, was neither so ancient nor so severe, nor of such duration as the fast of Lent. The fast of Lent holds from Ash Wednesday to Easter, forty days, and in all Latin countries it is known as Quadragesima, or the forty days fast. Advent begins on the Sunday next the Feast of St. Andrew, 30th November, and ends at Christmas. Again, the Lenten fast applies to every day from Ash Wednesday to Easter, Sundays excepted. During Advent, Wednesdays and Fridays only were fast days: outside of Ireland, Fridays and Saturdays. Under the New Code, no obligation attaches to these days now, and so the fast of Advent passes away from among the necessary observances of the Faithful.

The fast of the Ember Weeks or Quarter Tense, is in its origin the transfer to Christian use of a practice which obtained among the pagan Romans of fasting to propitiate the gods at the seed-time, the harvest, and the vintage. In adopting and Christianizing this usage the Church added a fourth fast, so that, as St. Leo, Pope, says, "Each season should be consecrated by a religious fast." Another purpose of this Quarter Tense fast, since almost the time of St. Leo, is to bring down upon the Levites, who on the Saturday of the Ember weeks receive Holy Orders, the more abundant graces suitable to their state. As the Apostles fasted before imposing hands upon the clerics of their day (Acts xiii), the Church has ever held this practice sacred, and by the united fasting of all the faithful she endeavours to secure the more plenteous outpouring of the gifts of the Holy Spirit on those who are raised to the office of the ministry. Originating in Rome, this fast spread throughout all the West—gradually, however—some countries adopting the usage earlier, some later, until now for centuries the Quarter Tense fast is everywhere observed throughout the Latin Church. Though the four seasons, from the third century onwards, were marked by this observance, there was no general uniformity as to the exact date until the time of St. Gregory, towards the end of the sixth century. From that onwards the Quarter Tense fast is kept on the same days everywhere. Though in its main features this fast—which is kept only on Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday of the Quarter Tense weeks—follows the law of Lent, it was never so far as the use of white meats, so strictly observed as the Feast of Lent. In our time, Pope Pius X allowed

(July 31st, 1912) to us the use of meat at dinner on the Saturday, or the second of two consecutive fast days. This Indulgence, however, does not apply to the Saturday of Quarter Tense week that comes early in Lent. At all other times of the Year, and whatever the motive of the fast, meat is always allowed at dinner on the second of two consecutive fast days in Ireland.

From the earliest times the Vigils of the greater Festivals were consecrated by fasting. To render the Faithful more worthy to join in the celebrations with which the Church wished to honour the memory of her Saints and Martyrs, and other solemnities, she always enjoined a fast. By suffering and self-denial the Saints washed away their sins and gained their crowns; only those who imitated their example could fittingly celebrate their triumphs. The Vigils of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, and of All Saints, as also of Pentecost and Christmas, are fast days.

Abstinence from meat on Friday in honour of Our Saviour's death has been observed in the Church since the earliest days of Christianity. After a time the practice was extended to Saturday, and in most Latin countries this Saturday abstinence was observed up to quite recently. According to the New Code (Canon 1254,) all who have completed their seventh year are bound to abstain on the days commanded. Protestants, in rejecting Friday abstinence, as in other things, showed a disposition as repugnant to Christian antiquity as to the spirit of Christianity itself. Abstinence from meat, as an essential element of the fast, urges no less on fast days than on the Fridays throughout the year. Nor is one free to assume, in the absence of a special

dispensation, that servile work entitles a person to exemption from abstaining on a fasting day. Just as the old and the young are bound to abstain from flesh meat on a day of fast, unless a dispensation, as in Lent, has been granted ; so also with those who are engaged in manual labour.

In all the modifications of the law of fasting which the Church has introduced during the course of ages, and most notably in these later times, it is remarkable and instructive how she has faithfully adhered to this discipline. Ever conscious of the reality of human frailty, and that in the things in which we have sinned we must do penance, she would teach us the great value of fasting, for obtaining from God what graces we need, as for satisfying Him for our transgressions. In the very mitigated form in which fasting is known to us in our time, no one need hesitate to observe it on the days ordered by the Church. Nor indeed will any good Catholic ever willingly surrender a usage, consecrated by the practice of our Saviour, and His Saints, and all God's special servants during all the ages of the world. But if so, one has to remember that to break the law of fast or abstinence is sinful, and if either in the quantity taken, or the quality of what one takes, the violation is serious, the sin is grievous.

The Third Precept.

"To confess our sins at least once a Year."

This law which was passed by the Fourth Council of Lateran, under Pope Innocent III, in A.D. 1215, gives

us the mind of the Church regarding the practice of Confession, and declares how often the faithful are to approach it. It is the law ever since that date that all who need Confession are obliged under penalty of grievous sin to confess at least once a year.

This law is standing evidence of the unceasing vigilance of the Church over the spiritual interests of her children. It is evidence too of her insight into the spirit of the times, and of her skill in adapting her discipline to the tone and temper of the ages, as the changing conditions of society affect and modify these. The hurried sketch of her varied legislation in the matter of fast and abstinence given in the preceding chapter is an example of this also, while both these precepts, though treating of widely different subjects, are in a measure counterparts of each other. It is historically true that as the law and the practice of fasting came to be more and more relaxed, the practice of confession came to be more frequent. Not indeed that Confession was not practised in every age, and cannot be traced back to the beginning of the Church. There is plenty of proof of its use among the Faithful from the earliest times, both in the East and in the West. But the elaborate system of penance which the sinner had to submit to in the first ages, and for the greater crimes the public penance he had to undergo, made frequent Confession not so usual or opportune as it became later on. In the early ages of the Church the sinner did penance indeed. The Canonical Penances which were passed upon the guilty, like the public sentence which the law of the land inflicts to-day for great crimes, could not well go hand-in-hand with frequent Confession. Nor

was it the spirit of the times to effect reconciliation and reparation for sin by the easier method of private Confession alone. Christianity came in upon a harsh and unfeeling world. The spirit which it breathed into everything could not in a day transform the temper of times that were heirs to centuries of paganism. Times that regarded slavery, e.g., as not incompatible with the dignity of humanity in its humbler members were ill-suited to the milder practices of more enlightened and civilized centuries. The strong turbulent passions of those days, and even of later times, in those whom the Church reclaimed from barbarism, were to be brought under by proportionately stubborn measures. Hence one explanation of the harsh penances for the lapsed from grace, and especially for the lapsed from faith, in the early ages of the Church. But as the Gospel made progress among the nations, and its ideals and aims gained a wider appreciation, gentler and more spiritual methods for dealing with the penitent came more and more to take the place of the public penances of the earlier centuries. Yet these penances came always subsequent to Confession, and were imposed by the Confessor in satisfaction for sins confessed. The power of binding and loosing from sin implied the disclosure of sin by everyone who sought the benefit of the exercise of that power. And it is striking what encouragements to Confession, and not to penance only, are to be found in the writings of the Fathers of the Church from the first ages onward, notwithstanding the fact that it entailed so often such severe penances. St. Clement, one of the first Popes, in his letter to the Corinthians, says; "It is better for a man to confess his

sins than to harden his heart." St. Irenæus (about A.D. 200) praised persons who made open Confession of their sins (*Adv. Hæres*). Origen in his *Homilies* mentions it as one of the ways of obtaining remission: "When the sinner does not shrink from showing his sins to the Priest of the Lord and from seeking the remedy (Origen A.D. 250). "St. Cyprian (A.D. 250) says: "Let each confess his sins while he is still in this world, while his Confession can be received, while satisfaction and forgiveness granted by the Priest is acceptable to God" (*De Lapsis*), and he holds up for imitation those "who in sorrow confess to the Priests of God, lay bare the burden of their souls, and seek a remedy for the wounds" (*De Lapsis*). St. Jerome (about A.D. 100) says: "The Bishops and the Priest bind or loose in virtue of their office . . . having heard various sorts of sinners they know who is to be bound and who is to be loosed." St. Augustine (about A.D 420) says in one of his sermons (cccxcii): "Let no one say I do penance secretly. I perform it in the sight of God, and He who is to pardon me knows that in my heart I repent. Was it then said to no purpose, what you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven? Was it for nothing that the keys were given to the Church." St. Leo, Pope, correcting some abuses that were creeping in, in his time, in Italy (A.D. 450), says: "It suffices that the guilt of conscience be manifested to priests alone in secret Confession." The Penitential Books of St. Columbanus and St. Cummian (about A.D. 600) which assign what penances are to be imposed for various sins of the more grievous kinds, attest the practice of Confession in the Irish Church in the early middle ages, while the title

"Soul's Friend," by which they designated one's Confessor, shows how familiar was the practice of Confession in the Irish Church in the palmy days of its history. The schoolmen in their treatises dealt exhaustively with penance; and St. Thomas in his work "*Contra Gentes*" explains Confession as follow: "The institution of Confession was necessary in order that the sins of the penitent might be revealed to Christ's minister. Hence the minister to whom the Confession is made must have judicial power as representing Christ the Judge of the living and the dead"; and he adds: "as no one can be saved without Baptism, so they who sin after Baptism cannot be saved unless they submit to the keys of the Church either by actually confessing, or by the resolution to confess when opportunity permits" (about A.D. 1250).

In all these writers, and many others whom one might easily quote, and who give not their own but the Church's teaching in this matter, the purpose is the same, viz., to make clear how indispensable for the sinner is Confession of his sins to the Priest. They do not say when, or how often he must confess, except in the case of the dying, when they do not hesitate to say if one departs this life without Confession he is not to be prayed for (*Council of Chalcuth*, 785). We must remember, however, that all those whom we have quoted belong to the times when the practice of penance and of fasting had continued in all the rigour of their pristine observance. A change was soon to come in, and with the change, or in anticipation of it, the practice of more frequent Confession was being gradually introduced. Indeed, long before this time St. Columbanus, who had made frequent Confession

the rule for his Monks, extended the practice to the converts whom he had won over to the Gospel: "We must be specially careful to confess our sins and imperfections before Mass, lest we should approach the altar with an unclean heart" (Canon xi, of his *Penitential*). This practice which orginated in the Columban Monasteries gradually spread throughout France. In a Council in England in 1009, A.D., the Fathers exhort "Every Christian to accustom himself to frequent Confession, to fearlessly confess his sins, and carefully to amend as he is directed." In earlier times when public penance was imposed and carried out faithfully, and the Penitential Books laid down what penances should be done for certain great crimes, no writer goes farther than to urge Confession, and enlarge on the benefits derived from it, as we see in the writers we have quoted. But when a change had set in, in the habits of the people, and pilgrimages for penance were becoming more rare, and especially when to join the Crusades for the rescue of the Holy Places from the infidel was made a substitute for all kinds of penances (*Council of Clermont*, 1096), we begin to hear more about frequent Confession. The English Synod, that exhorts every Christian to frequent Confession, and exhortations of a like nature made by Synods in other places, are symptoms of a growing feeling all over the Church leading up to the Lateran Council that declared annual Confession a duty. From this position there is no receding ever since. Not alone, then, have we to confess our sins in life, sometimes, and especially at death, to those to whom Christ gave the power of binding and loosing, but this duty urges every recurring year

at least. " Everyone of the Faithful of both sexes that has come to the years of discretion must confess all their sins at least once a year," are the words of the decree of this historic Council. Though the decree goes farther, specifying the priest to whom confession is to be made, and the penalties incurred by anyone who fails to comply with it, the substance of the enactment is contained in the words above quoted ; and this has continued to be the law without change or mitigation ever since (*New Code,* Canon 906). What is very striking considering the whole matter, is the moderation displayed by the Church in framing this law. The days of long and severe penances were passing away, hardly ever to return. The question before the Council was how best to bring the Faithful to the use of the almost only remaining remedy for grievous sin. For venial sin, though usefully declared in Confession, as the Council of Trent teaches, is not necessary matter for Confession at all and is expiated in many other ways. Yet though the question in hand is of the greatest importance and the end aimed at is what above all else the Church desires, viz., the grace of God in the souls of her children, with a moderation that is admirable, she places the duty of Confession for those that need it in ordinary circumstances no higher than an annually recurring duty. This, however, is not the only question decided by this decree. It is an official declaration by the Church, and made now for the first time, of the necessity of Confession to the priest for the forgiveness of grievous sin. All controversy on that point is now definitely set at rest, and one view only can be held in this matter of the greatest practical importance

that for the forgiveness of grievous sins Confession is indispensable. It teaches, besides, at least by implication, that every sin, how grievous soever, may be forgiven through Confession. Else, why the necessity of confessing all our sins ? And as the word of the Church is the expression to us of the mind of her Founder, we may be satisfied that though a much more frequent use of the Sacrament of reconciliation is desirable, as long as sinners seek pardon by annual Confession they incur no guilt by delaying so long to seek the absolution of the priest.

On the other hand, severe penalties are imposed on anyone who may outstep the limit fixed by the Council. By this we are taught that it is bad to delay Confession after grievous sin—so bad indeed, that the Church does not hesitate to make it grievously sinful to put off Confession for more than a year. This is still further suggested by the qualifying words " at least," introduced into the decree. Those who have fallen from grace are ordered to confess not once, but " at least" once a year. In such manner as this would the Church bring the Faithful to realize both the evil of putting off Confession, and the source of life-giving grace they have in Confession at all times.

In the words of the decree, confession is to be made to our own priest, but that expression only designates a priest duly authorized by the Bishop to hear Confessions. The judicial character of the office of Confessor demands in him authority over his penitents. He has to decide according to the nature of the case submitted to Him, and the dispositions of the penitent whether he is to be loosed from His sins or not, and what

satisfaction he has to make in atonement for them. According as he binds or looses the penitent is forgiven or not forgiven, and the decision he comes to is ratified in Heaven " Whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven them, and whose sins you shall retain they are retained " (John, xx, 23) In another place Our Saviour said to His disciples, " whatsoever you shall bind upon earth, shall be bound also in heaven : and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven " (Matt. xviii, 18). The official interpretation put upon these words by the Church (*Council of Trent*, Sess, xiv). and which is the ordinary meaning they convey, explains the purpose of Confession, and justifies the practice of it which has always obtained in the Church. " We confess our sins to the priest, so that he who has the power to absolve us from them may know what sins he is to absolve us from, and whether we have the dispositions that entitle us to receive absolution at his hands " (*Council of Trent*, Sess. xiv, Cap. 5.).

Confession of course, has many other useful effects. Together with the relief it brings to unburden the wounded mind by opening its sores to one skilled in the treatment of them, the personal guidance and direction it secures is among the best and surest safeguards against future relapse. Indeed the Sacrament of Penance is among the greatest miracles of grace with which our Saviour endowed His Church. Nor is it to be regarded as other than a refinement of mercy that the minister of this Sacrament, however great his office, is a man like ourselves, " Who can have compassion on them that are ignorant and that err, because

he himself is also compassed with infirmity" (Heb. v). And no one need complain that those for whom this Sacrament was instituted and who need its healing virtue should be made to seek it once a year at least in that form in which it is made available, viz., by Confession. The end aimed at by Confession is to bestow pardon on the sinner for his past sins and to furnish at the same time the most effectual help against future relapse. Hence he is at liberty to select the confessor of his choice, to reveal to him his sins and the state of his conscience, and to obtain the counsel and direction on which he has most confidence (*New Code,* Canon 905). It matters little how we count the year within which we must confess. We may begin with the year in January or date it from our last confession. What matters most is that, influenced by a befitting sense of the sacredness of Confession, and what blessed results attend it, we allow nothing in our preparation beforehand or in our manner of making our Confession, that would mar or minimize these. It must of course be a full Confession of all our grievous sins (*Council of Trent,* Sess. xiv, cap. 5) inspired by a sincere spirit of contrition and repentance, and an honest purpose of amendment. And whether one comes to Confession often or only rarely, no one who is in earnest about his own spiritual interests will lightly regard the gentle pressure of the Church towards frequent Confession, wisely conveyed to us in the words of the Precept—to confess our sins *at least once* a year.

The Fourth Precept.

To receive the Blessed Eucharist at Easter, or within the time appointed, that is—from Ash Wednesday in this country, to Trinity Sunday."

This Precept of receiving Holy Communion at Easter, or the Paschal Precept as it is called, was enacted at the same time and in the same decree as the previous one about annual Confession—at the Fourth Council of Lateran. As we consider these precepts one after another, their importance not alone as commandments, but as sources of instruction, becomes increasingly manifest. For they were made not for a class or a people but for all the Faithful everywhere, and what they enforce are the special and distinctive practices of the Religion of our Saviour. Just as the Old Law had its religious observances, which the Jews had to carry out into practice, so the religion of Christ, which superseded that of the Old Law, and which since His day is the only acceptable worship, has its own special practices which must be religiously observed by its adherents. These observances date back from the first days of the Church, and are made known to us now by her Precepts. The fact that in the later times she enforces them by Precepts but shows what essential religious practices they are. Hence to hear Mass on Sundays and holidays, to fast and abstain on certain days and at certain seasons, to go to Confession at least once a year, and to receive Holy Communion at Easter time, and the rest,—are not matters of devotion and praiseworthy practices only; they are observances implied in the profession of the Catholic faith, that grew with its

growth, and spread with its development, the habitual neglect of which means a practical falling away from membership of the Church. On the other hand by these Precepts all concern is removed as to what duties religion requires of us. On satisfying these one may feel that to do more is to attempt the ways of virtue. To do only as much as the Precepts require if only the essentials satisfies at least the essentials of Christian duty. The language of our Saviour, though emphatic enough, left much to be filled in when it came to carrying out His commands into practice. If people must confess their sins so as to be loosed from them, it is necessary to know how often, and under what conditions Confession is to be made. And if under severe penalties Holy Communion is to be received we must be told when the obligation urges, and how it is to be fulfilled. In clearing up these and other points, as the Church does by her Precepts, we recognize her signal services to us. The nature and the number of her Precepts declare the measure of our duty. Her services in this matter are seen to much advantage when we come to consider the Precept we have now in hands, viz., that of receiving Holy Communion.

The sacredness of Holy Communion constitutes a genuine difficulty when it is a question of receiving It. To know that in Holy Communion we have Our Blessed Lord Himself, not in figure or memorial. but in reality—the self-same that was born, lived, and died, for us—the Son of God made Man—is more than enough for silent wonder and respectful worship, if no more. That He has veiled His glory with the vesture of the accidents of bread, how disarming soever of our fears,

does not do away with the startling thought of the Divine Majesty hidden there, if even in loving condescension and kindness towards us. The pleadings to be excused from attending the banquet in the Gospel (Luke xiv), which many who were invited made, may with better reason be urged by sinful men who are exhorted to approach the Holy Table. Only a binding Precept could definitely decide one held back by a sense of personal unworthiness and urged forward by entreaties and menaces.

Considered in the light of history, the anxious inquirer finds little that is satisfying in reference to this matter. Scarcely in anything is there such variety of usage as in the practice of receiving Holy Communion. Though the wish of the Church in every age was uniform and unchanging, viz., that the faithful should receive frequently—daily if possible, the practice of even the pious was often far from that. At first, daily or at least frequent Communion was the custom. Whether like the Jews in the wilderness, the Faithful in those days could not live in the barren waste of an unbelieving world unless they received this Bread from Heaven daily, or surely could not outlive the persecutions of the first centuries unless strengthened by this Bread of Angels—frequent Communion, at any rate, was the custom in the first ages of the Church. But when with the Peace of Constantine early in the fourth century society began to be leavened with the teaching and principles of the Gospel, and the same urgent need of Divine support was not so sensibly felt, less frequent Communion became usual. The discipline, too, that had already set in at that time, of long and severe

penance for certain sins, and that in some cases excluded the penitent from the more sacred parts of the Mass was not favourable to frequent Communion. In an Irish Synod held at the time of Pope Leo III, in A.D. 807 or 808, dealing with the penitent it is enacted "The first year and a half being finished he will partake of the Body and Blood of Christ." Though this ordinance gives no definite information as to the frequency of Holy Communion in Ireland at the time, to prevent one from receiving for a year and a half was intended for a penalty. The time was not far off when pious people hardly dared to approach the Holy Table more frequently. They went on pilgrimages to distant shrines in the Continent. They travelled on foot to Rome, Compostella, and Jerusalem. The wealthy built and endowed monasteries and churches: All were prepared to submit to severe penance. They had a wonderful devotion to Holy Mass, which business men in many instances heard daily, but to frequent the Holy Table was not among the notable practices of the ages of Faith. Persons who lived saintly lives and whose names are in the calendar received Holy Communion only a few times in the year. As far back as A.D. 506 the Council of Adge under St. Cæsarius of Arles decreed that Communion should be received three times a year. In a collection of Irish Canons dated about 700 we read: "Whosoever does not Communicate at Easter should not be reckoned among the Faithful" (Moran, Early Irish Church). In Germany about the year 900, one of the questions asked by a Bishop on visitation of his Diocese was "Do the people receive Holy Communion at Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost?" In that and the succeeding centuries

there was a marked absence of the practice of frequent Communion. In many places on the Continent local Synods decreed that Holy Communion should be received three or four times a year. The words of Our Lord " Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His Blood you shall not have life in you " (John 54), were ever ringing, as it were, in the ears of the Church, and decided for her beforehand the duty of the Faithful. It was at no time in doubt that all who had come to the years of discretion are subject to that compelling Precept. It was never doubted that it urged at death ; no one was to face the journey to eternity without partaking of this strengthening Viaticum. It was never in question that what the Author of the Holy Communion called " Bread from Heaven," what He compared to the manna, though incomparably superior to it (John vi), and what He gave under the appearance of our daily food, was to be received frequently in life. The only thing that was not clear was how frequently should people partake of it. The Fourth Council of Lateran decreed under threat of separation from the Fold, that it must be received every year, at Easter time at least. The decree does not say it expressly, but the natural inference from a law enforced with such sanction is, that to act up to the mind of the Church, and therefore according to the wish of Her Founder, Holy Communion ought to he received frequently every year.

To this authoritative decree, dating far back in the middle ages, we can trace the beginning of a movement that regards the Blessed Sacrament, the centre of the devotional life of the Church. Soon after this Council, a Festival in honour of the Blessed Sacrament—Corpus

Christi—was introduced. St. Thomas, the greatest theologian of any age—was ordered by the Pope of of the time, Urban IV, to compose the office for the Festival. Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, the must beautiful of all devotions, with its light, its incense and appropriate hymns, came later. And when after another lapse of time the Church assembled her Doctors to declare her teaching, treating of the Blessed Sacrament and Holy Communion which Protestantism tried to wipe away altogether, reducing it to a symbol—she recalls the primitive usage of the Apostolic age, and urges frequent Communion on the Faithful: "the life of the soul and enduring health of the mind (*Council of Trent*, Sess. xiii, Chap. 8). More than three hundered years of growing devotion to the Blessed Sacrament pass by, and in our own day in the midst of revolutionary change in the ideas and usages and social relations of the people everywhere, Pope Pius X issues an instruction to the Faithful to hasten to the altar to receive there their daily Bread in the Holy Communion. In the light of a tradition like this that goes back to the first days of Christianity, and that, if obscured for a time, bursts into life again, and in our day is taken up by the head of the Church, we are to view the precept of the Easter Communion. That Precept gives but the greatest extension that can be given to the charity of Christ, that suffers a yearly communicant to be accounted a member of the Fold. As long as we do our Easter duty, externally, we are members of the Church; internally and at heart, the life that is nourished by Holy Communion received but once a year is a languid life, if not quite extinct.

On the other hand, the purpose of the Church at all times is to reduce, not to multiply, occasions of sin. And if at the time of the Lateran Council the Communions of good people were only a few in a year, people who made little or no pretence of piety did not trouble to go even once in twelve months. To bring these under the patient yoke of Christ in the hope of making them better some day, Easter Communion only was required of them. As the purpose of this Precept is to bring the Faithful to the Holy Table, in case the Easter time is allowed to pass, the obligation to approach the altar still continues, and even, if possible, with greater urgency (*New Code*, Can. 859). An unworthy Communion it need not be said does not meet the ends of this Precept, nor extinguish its obligation (*New Code*, Can. 859). The Lateran precept requires Holy Communion in our parish, and from our own pastor. Pope Pius X modified the law in these particulars, allowing and requiring only to notify the parish priest that Holy Communion was received elsewhere. This rule has been adopted in the New Code, and is now the law in this particular. The Paschal Precept binds all the Faithful from the years of discretion onwards (*New Code*, Can. 959).

To this Pope belongs the distinction of inducing the Faithful to receive Holy Communion much more frequently than had been the custom generally since the first ages of the Church. He made open the way to the Altar for the Children at a much earlier age than had been usual for many centuries. And the striking sense those children manifest of the presence of the Redeemer under the Sacramental veils, attests how

correctly the Holy Pontiff interpreted the petition of His Master when he said, " Suffer the little children to come unto Me ", when he introduced the law of early First Communion for them. The Precept of the Paschal Communion is not abrogated by the action of Pope Pius X in bringing the faithful to frequent Communion. The easy requisites, on the contrary, for daily Communion, of freedom from grievous sin and a good intention, which the Pontiff lays down, are destined, one may hope, to make violations of the Paschal Precept increasingly rare in the coming years. The Holy Communion is the support and mainstay of our spiritual life. To indicate this truth to us, Our Saviour would institute It under the form of our corporal food. If we would repair the losses of our spiritual life, induced by the wear and tear of daily experience on the part of a nature not too religious, in contact with a world not too spiritual: if we would grow to the full proportions of a robust and healthy Christian life, we must come to the Holy Communion, not once in a year, to which under the penalty of spiritual death we are obliged, but to frequent Communion, a practice which is at once a privilege and a grace—the most fruitful of all devotions—the best safeguard and guarantee of a good life, and the promise of a glorious immortality—" The antidote that frees us from the lighter faults of every day, preserves us from grievous sin—the pledge moreover of our future glory and perpetual felicity" (*Council of Trent*, Sess. xiii, Chap. 2).

The Fifth Precept.

"To contribute to the support of our Pastors."

By this precept the Church makes known the duty of the Faithful to those to whom by divine appointment is committed "the dispensation of the Mysteries of God." Not to Angels, though incomparably superior, but to mortal men, "who are compassed with infirmity" (Heb. ii), has God entrusted the ministration of the services of Faith. "For every High Priest taken from among men is ordained for men in the things that appertain to God" (Heb. v, 1). Just as God Himself when He would redeem mankind, took up our human nature and by means of it effected our redemption, so to men would He entrust the ministration of His grace, and men would He appoint as mediators to reconcile their fellow men with Himself. He employs Angels as we know, as extraordinary agents of His Will. But men like ourselves, "who can have compassion on them that are ignorant and that err," but "that are called by God as Aaron was" (Heb. v, 2, 4), would He have for the work of the ministry among the people. Their maintenance and support is a first charge upon those among whom, and in whose behalf "they offer up gifts and sacrifices" (Heb. v, 1). It was so in the Old Law. "I have given the sons of Levi all the tithes of Israel for a possession for the ministry wherewith they serve Me in the tabernacle of the covenant" (Num xviii, 21). It was not left to the people to make provision for the priests. A tenth part was appointed for them in the Law and charged upon all the tribes of Israel for their mainten-

ance. And though in the New Dispensation no special charge is specified for the clergy, the principle that they should be maintained by the Faithful was set up by Our Saviour. "Know ye not," says St. Paul, "that they who work in the holy place eat the things that are of the holy place, and they that serve the altar partake with the altar, so also the Lord ordained that they who preach the Gospel should live by the Gospel" (Cor. ix, 13, 14). It is not, then, left to the judgment or good sense, or the generosity, or religious feeling of the Faithful to contribute to the maintenance of the clergy. Their support is a charge that goes with the Gospel, and falls upon those for whose spiritual welfare they devote their time to the work of the ministry. And on the authority of St. Paul this has been so arranged beforehand by Our Saviour Himself. As the ox that treadeth the corn (Deut. xxv, 4), "was not to be muzzled," and the priest that served at the Altar, partook of the Altar, under the Old Dispensation, so Our Lord would have it that they who preached His gospel and ministered to the Faithful should be maintained by the Faithful. Nor indeed is there anything that commends itself more readily to our judgment than this "If we have sown unto you spiritual things is it a great matter if we reap your carnal things?" (1 Cor. ix, 11) says St. Paul. That the labourer is worthy of his hire, has passed into a proverb; that the person to pay him is he for whom he labours, is equally admitted. And just as in every form of enterprise a man gets his living from the industry on which his labour is expended, so with the minister of religion. Nor does it make a

difference that the stipend of the priest is not recoverable by law. There is no reason indeed why it should not, and in a Christian state the principle of the maintenance of the clergy ought to be upheld. But if the law of the land has failed the Church has seen to it, and by means of this precept we are now considering, and that goes back through the ages, she enforces the obligation of supporting the clergy wherever provision has not otherwise been made for their maintenance. And here, too, she has but applied the principle laid down by Our Saviour, and made known by St. Paul, "that they who preach the Gospel should live by the Gospel" (1 Cor. ix, 14). This principle, indeed, is so much in accord with the instincts of religion, and so reasonable in itself, that pious people everywhere and always are generous in giving to the clergy. And just as the wealthy among the faithful rejoice in raising up temples, as Solomon did, for divine worship, and consider the most perfect but poor and inadequate for the purpose, and endowing them: so too have they in times past made provision not alone for the clergy of their day, but for those of the future, by the foundation of benefices or livings for their use. The history of all the countries of Europe bears eloquent testimony to the devotion of the people, and especially of Catholic princes and rulers, to the maintenance of religion and its ministers. The blackest page in the records of nearly all these countries, since the days of Henry VIII of England, is the account of the spoliation of the religious houses and clergy. One effect of such unjust seizures of religious property by irreligious Governments is to throw back the Clergy again on the

body of the Faithful for support, as has taken place quite lately in France. Nor is there a doubt, indeed that it redounds to the spiritual welfare of the people, and to the advancement of their social and religions interests, when the burdens of religion fall directly on those who reap its benefits. In Ireland and Great Britain, in the United States and Canada, as well as in Australia, New Zealand, and elsewhere where such is the case, even though there are yet no religious establishments to compare in magnificence with those of the Europe of Catholic days, religion holds its place in the devotion and reverence of the people, and the becoming maintenance of it and of its ministers is a charge which ever receives a willing liquidation and a generous response. But if God makes the evil deeds of impious and unjust men, who in the days of their power forfeit or stifle in their hearts the instincts of religion and justice or have lost them, the occasion of much good, their seizure of the propety of the Church is none the less sinful on that account. The amount that is paid and the occasions on which contributions are made, differ with local circumstances, usages and traditions. But under whatever name recognized, and whatever the occasion, the principle holds, that the claim of the clergy on the people for support is divine in its origin, is proclaimed by the Church, and is enforced by the Fifth Precept. The records of the earliest days of the Church tell of the contributions of the faithful which were regularly and systematically made. These were handed to the Bishop, and allocated by him to the support of the clergy, the maintenance of religion and religious

establishments, and to the assistance of the poor. In continental countries where princes in later times, after the example of the first Christian Emperor, made large endowments to lighten the burden of religion on their subjects, the call upon the people became a lighter charge in most places. But with the changing conditions that have come with time, and the doings of impious men, all this is now changed almost everywhere, and with coresponding difference to the Faithful. And as in the case of the people as a whole, so in the altered circumstances of individuals and families, when men are successful in the professions or business, and modifications necessarily arise in their relations with the Church, as with everything else, the support of religion and its ministers should give evidence of this change.

Where the organization of the Church is fully introduced, and parishes are regularly established, the relations of the clergy and people to each other are more intimate and urgent. According to the New Code parochial offerings regularly subscribed constitute a benefice or living (Canon 1410), and beneficed clergy are more strictly bound to their people than non-beneficed. The obligation of the people to them is correspondingly increased and the duty of contributing to their maintenance more pressing. But, whether or not, the sense of religion which animates both clergy and people all over the Church, and the relations of mutual dependence on each other for the highest services, and over all, the reciprocal attachment which bind pastor and people together in regularly defined parishes, are sufficient guarantee that whatever suffers the clergy never will

from failure on the part of their flocks to maintain them in a position befitting their office and rank. Wherever religion is more than a fashion, where it is the vehicle that bears us up to the presence of God, and teaches us how to express our thoughts to Him in the every-day experiences of life as in its most momentous crises, when its minister introduces us into the privileged ranks of sonship of the Most High at our birth, and reconciles us with our Father when we may have forgotten our duty, when our Sundays are brightened by his presence at the Altar, and our way is lighted by his instruction to the congregation, when marriage is sanctified by his blessing, and death made safe by his ministration, when he is our trusted counsellor in doubt, and our consoler in sorrow, ever ready, moreover to face death if need be, for our salvation, as is every parochial priest, his stipends are assured from a grateful and responsive people. But while warranted by services so precious, and relations so intimate, the foundation on which these stipends are based was laid by the divine will, and this is declared to us by the word of God, and the voice of the Church in its Fifth Precept.

In our offerings to religion and its ministers whatsoever the occasion, we have only to remember that here is no commercial transaction, as if paying an equivalent for services rendered, or favours received. The work of the priest is spiritual. His ministrations are of the supernatural order. Between such services, and offerings that are wholly material, there is neither an equivalent, nor a basis of equality. The most that can be done is to make these ministrations of the priest

an occasion for an offering of such goods as we can offer, and as are necessary and useful for his wants or comfort, in the faith and hope that, in view of the offerings we make, and the ministrations they occasion in God's honour, He may be pleased to bestow His blessings the more readily and abundantly upon us. "Honour God with thy substance and give Him the first of all thy fruits" (Prov. iii), as a tribute to His majesty and in the hope of His mercy and grace. Offer to religion and its ministers as to the one interest on earth with which His name and His honour are directly identified, and though the offering is a material one, the spirit that inspires and informs it will raise it to a higher order, and bring a blessing on the giver. Nor was the purpose that inspired this arrangement under the Old Law, or the New, other than this. Whether religion, then, is in affluence or otherwise, whether the clergy and religious establishments are in opulence or indigence, the incidence of the charge will vary accordingly, of course, but the principle is the same, and is divinely imposed, viz., that the maintenance of the Minister of the Gospel and of religious interests is a charge on the people. The Council of Trent, having laid down the duty of the people in this matter, ends with the following words, which we may adopt as the termination of this chapter: "We exhort all persons for Christian charity, and the duty which they owe to their Pastors, to give generously of the goods which God has given them, to their Bishops and Parish Clergy for the glory of God, and the proper dignity of those who are charged with the duty of watching over them" (Sess. xxv, Cap. 12).

The Sixth Precept.

Not to solemnize marriage at the forbidden times nor to marry persons within the forbidden degrees of kindred or otherwise prohibited by the Church, or clandestinely.

This is the Sixth and last Precept of the Church, and the matter it treats of bespeaks its importance. There is nothing in a man's experience to compare in importance with his marriage. It is the most personal of all his engagements. His happiness and success in life are more largely dependent upon it than upon anything else. Then marriage is the divinely instituted means for the propagation and permanence of the human race. It dates from Eden. And as it is the source from which mankind is perennially reproduced, it is the largest determining factor in the well-being and progress of the race. There is nothing, therefore, that should be approached with more forethought, in every instance, by the parties immediately concerned. There is nothing on which the solicitude of those who are charged with a care for the well-being of the people should be more sedulously exercised. Hence, marriage did not escape the attention of Our Blessed Saviour. He found it in being before Him; He recognized and honoured it; and He left the impress of His Hands upon it, so that, since His day, there is a character and perfection attaching to it that is found only in Christian marriage. Among Christians, marriage is the life-long union of one man and one woman with each other. Each is the exclusive property of each, for the purposes for which marriage was originally instituted. That intimate and exclusive union can be terminated by no power on

earth once marriage is perfected. "What therefore God hath joined together let no man put asunder" (Matt. xix, 6), are the forbidding words of our Saviour. Death alone can release a Christian husband and a Christian wife from their mutual union with each other. "A woman is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth, but if her husband die she is at liberty" (1 Cor. vii, 39). The contract, by which this extraordinary union is brought about among Christians, has a spiritual character and efficacy. Since the days of our Saviour, and thanks to His action upon it, it is a Sacrament. This is the constant and unchanging teaching of the Church. The Council of Trent declared it to be so, and in Session xxiv, she pronounces anathema on any one who should venture to contradict this doctrine. "If any one should say that Matrimony is not truly and properly one of the Seven Sacraments of the New Law, instituted by Christ our Lord, but that it is an invention of men, in the Church, and that it does not confer grace, let him be anathema."

In the olden days, when circumstances permitted, a man might be married to more than one wife at the same time. It was never permitted that a woman would have more than one husband during the lifetime of another. Under the law of Moses, divorce was allowed in certain cases. Our Saviour did away with both these usages, making marriage one and indissoluble except by death.

To obviate the difficulties that might arise in certain unions, and to mark His appreciation and sanction of marriage, as well as to endow it with such help as would be useful in fusing into one harmonious view two minds and temperaments that had a common interest in life,

and had to bear its burdens in common, He made it a source of grace and sanctification. Marriage being a Sacrament among Christians, it is within the province of the Church to care and legislate for it. It is her right, not to say her duty, to see to it that it shall be entered into in every instance, under such conditions as are in keeping with its important nature and sacred character. Knowing her mind in this matter, and understanding her position, she has at all times vindicated her rights in reference to marriage, and made such laws from time to time as seemed useful and desirable, heedless of outside opinion in whatsoever quarter prevailing. Being entered into chiefly in youth, there is all the more reason that an authority like the Church should safeguard a contract at once so important and so sacred. In no meddlesome spirit, then, but with a view to the respect and honour due to an institution that over and above the important place it holds in the society of men has a sacredness peculiar to itself as a Sacrament of the New Law, has the Church surrounded marriage with a variety of safeguards. This she has done to make sure that it shall be celebrated on all occasions with befitting propriety and formality.

As many as fourteen contingencies are specified, in any one of which, if marriage is attempted it cannot be contracted. It is not that marriage is unlawful in these circumstances. It is altogether invalid. It is no marriage at all. To disregard these would nullify the contract. And this is so even though the contracting parties may not be conscious of the disabling circumstances in their case. These are made diriment impediments, as they are called. All are aware, for

instance, that parties nearly related cannot be married to each other, even though they know nothing of the relationship. On this relationship of blood the impediment of consanguinity is founded, and it extends to the third degree ; that is, second cousins, and persons more closely related, cannot be married to each other. In like manner, it is well known that a man cannot be married to the sister of his deceased wife, nor a woman to the brother of her deceased husband ; nor indeed to any of his relations up to the second degree. This is what is known as the impediment of affinity. By marriage one becomes incorporated in the family of one's consort, and, if for no graver reason, it is an outrage on the finer feelings which must be fostered among Christians, to think of marrying the sister of a deceased wife, or the brother of a deceased husband. Attempts have been made to introduce legislation sanctioning marriage in such cases by the legislature. But enough Christian sentiment has still survived outside the Church to forbid such improper alliances. But whether or not the Church effectively forbids marriage in this case. Solemn Vows of Religion, or the Sacrament of Holy Orders, both constituting a form of life incompatible with Matrimony effectually rule it out in the subjects of these. An impediment of great importance is that of crime ; that is, when a husband or wife is guilty of compassing the death of their consort with a view of contracting marriage with a person with whom they have had criminal relations, or when one or other of them is guilty of criminal intercourse with another person with a promise of future marriage. Under such circumstances marriage of the culprits afterwards with each other is made impossible

by this impediment. Again, a Catholic cannot be married except by the Parish Priest of the place where the marriage is celebrated ; or by another Priest with his leave, or the leave of the Bishop, with two witnesses at least. This is a variant introduced by the late Pope Pius X, of the law of clandestinity introduced by the Council of Trent, which made marriage invalid unless celebrated before the Parish Priest of one or other of the contracting parties. Previous to the Council of Trent such marriages were only illicit. To prevent abuses the Council made it obligatory on penalty of invalidity, to have the marriage of Catholics contracted before the Parish Priest of the man or woman, with two witnesses besides. Similarly, a Catholic cannot be married to an unbaptized person, such as a Jew or a heretic who has never been baptized. For these and such like grave reasons has the Church introduced her diriment impediments of Matrimony, and to indicate these impediments is to justify them. Some of them are based on the law of nature, as consanguinity ; some are necessary safeguards of the validity of Matrimony, as in the case of those who are under age, e.g., a boy under seventeen years ; some the only effective protection of the liberty of the contracting parties, as when a girl is forced to marry against her will, while all of them are motived by the strongest reasons of the ethical and social well-being of Christian society at large, as of the persons immediately concerned.

It is idle to question the authority of the Church to constitute diriment impediments of Matrimony. There is no fear, indeed, that she will exceed her power, or invade a province outside her proper boundaries. The

Spirit that guides her sees to that at all times, and sustained by His support she pursues her course, indifferent to the complaints of unbelieving men. So it was when Pope Pius X, issued the Decree "*Ne Temere,*" concerning mixed marriages, some years ago. In the altered conditions of society in the social and religious world, when world-wide travel and intercourse is possible to all, and religion has become so weakened an influence with so many, to safeguard society at its fountain head, the Pontiff made the celebration of Matrimony before the Parish Priest of the place, an essential condition of its validity, for all who, at any time in life—in childhood or age, have been baptized in the Church. The Parish Priest has to make sure in all cases that the parties before him are at liberty to marry. The unity and sanctity of Christian marriage demand such safeguards as this, and the Popes who understand their times are sure to make such requisite provision as the conditions of the day demand. So it was at the time of the Council of Trent with regard to clandestine marriages. So it was at all times in the past, and so will it be again in the future whenever circumstances recommend a change in any particular. But in nothing is the reasonableness of the Church and her genuine considerateness more manifest, and the favourable contrast to the civil power in which she stands, when it comes to applying her laws in particular cases than in dealing with the contract of Matrimony. The civil law recognizes no exception (has no dispensing functionary). Like the custom of the Medes and Persians, with unbending stringency the law tolerates no exceptions. It is otherwise in the Church. Every law

of discipline is capable of exception, and when good reasons are submitted in the proper quarter, in any particular instance, a dispensation can be obtained. But in any case marriage is a Sacrament. It is the right and duty of the Church to define the conditions of its celebration. And just as the civil power annuls the contracts of its subjects if destitute of the specified formalities, so does the Church annul the marriages of her children, contracted under specified disabilities. To obviate so undesirable an issue the practice of proclaiming intended marriages is a recognized part of Church discipline. And, where the banns of marriage are not announced beforehand, timely notice must be served on the Parish Priest, whose duty it then becomes to make all necessary inquiries, so that the procedure to be followed in each case may be carried out. In such circumstances it is a duty of religion and charity to supply the information on which the validity of a marriage may depend. And since a dispensation is obtainable on good cause shown, there is no reason to withhold from the Priest who is officially concerned, information so important.

Being a Sacrament, marriage confers sanctifying grace when received with proper dispositions, and the actual graces special to it as occasion afterwards demands. And as is well known one must be in the state of grace to receive it worthily. It is not to be contracted during the penitential seasons. But if found desirable then, the Nuptial Blessing appropriate to marriage is withheld. Mixed Marriages, or where one of the contracting parties only is a Catholic, the other a non-Catholic, though allowed by dispensation for grave reasons, are looked upon with disfavour, and are denied the solem-

nities with which marriage is honoured when both contracting parties are Catholics. To obtain a dispensation in this case a guarantee must be given by the non-Catholic party of the full religious liberty of the Catholic side; and that the children of the marriage will be baptized, and brought up in the Catholic Faith. Such marriages, since the Decree "*Ne Temere,*" must on pain of invalidity be celebrated before the Parish Priest, with the usual witnesses.

A simple Vow of Chastity makes a subsequent marriage unlawful, but for this also, on suitable grounds, a dispensation may be obtained. Marriage, if contracted in either of these cases is valid, but illicit. But since the Decree "*Ne Temere,*" a mixed marriage that is only illicit and not also invalid is a rare thing indeed. The consent of the parents is always to be sought, and as far as possible their advice is to be followed, and their approval and blessing secured on the choice and marriage of the children. This is according to the law of nature; and St. Paul, writing to the Corinthians, seems to place the burden on the father of providing for the marriage of his daughters (1 Cor. vii), somewhat as is done so generally in Ireland. The wish of the Church, though not expressed in actual law in this particular, is entirely in this direction.

In treating of this Precept we have referred only to the leading features of Matrimony among Catholics, which, indeed, is the subject matter of the Precept; and to such Impediments to its celebration as are of more frequent occurrence. As, however, Marriage cannot be contracted among Catholics without reference to the Parish Priest, whose duty it is to see to what is required

for its due celebration, the parties concerned will always receive from him all necessary and useful instruction in their special case and circumstances.

We have dealt now one by one with the Precepts of the Church. As the Ten Commandments of God lay down the moral law, and define its requirements for mankind at large, the Precepts lay down and enforce the duties which the religion of Christ demands of its followers. And as we notice, these Precepts are not mere dry and formal rules of discipline. They are, on the contrary, each of them, a provision for securing the fruits of grace and sanctification for the members of the Church. We have now to consider the sources of grace, and what helps they furnish to enable us to observe the Commandments of God, and the Precepts of the Church.

CHAPTER XXXII.

On Prayer.

The Commandments of God and of His Church, which we have considered in the preceding chapter, tell us what the service of God demands. To know all this is a distinct gain. To do it is to fulfil the end and purpose of man's life on earth. And as there is hardly a situation that arises in which one or other of the Commandments does not come in, to make them the

guide and arbiter of our action in these circumstances is to pay tribute to God, whose will they intimate to us at all times. The nearer we approach to this, always the nearer we come to earthly happiness. The road to future happiness lies no other way. "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the Commandments" (Matt. xix, 17). Then, as God who sent us here to serve Him is no task-master, who would place a greater burden on us than we can bear, it is certain that to observe them is within our power if we seriously mean to do it. This, however, is not so say that we have it within ourselves to be faithful at all times and under every circumstance. Contingencies arise in every life, when to keep the Commandments is a strain upon our strength that it is not equal to without help from above. It was easy for man, as originally constituted, to observe the light precept given to him in the Garden of Paradise. But when he failed to do it a new state of things supervened; and in his altered circumstances, to resist his passions, to overcome in short, the world, the flesh, and the devil—the three great forces that war against the spirit—it is necessary to seek help from God by prayer. And this is one of the ways of Providence to make us think of Him, and seek from Him by prayer the necessary helps to be faithful in His service at all times.

Again, the motive of Christian conduct as such is not the natural rectitude or propriety of our actions. A pagan may have no higher reason for doing good. We do what is good and right for the higher end and purpose of pleasing God, whose will is intimated to us by His Law. Now, to do or not to do a thing because it is God's wish, is prayer in action. It is to raise

up our actions from the level of their natural goodness to a higher level, investing them with a supernatural character. Without this informing and transforming purpose, good in themselves and helpful to others as our acts may be, they have no higher value than what comes from nature—their native goodness—and they count for nothing by way of grace and merit. Hence the importance of prayer in this sense at least. In this sense St. Paul speaks when he says: "If I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing" (1 Cor. xiii, 3). For this reason He says in another place in the same Epistle (Ch. x, 31): "Whether you eat or drink or whatsoever else you do, do all to the glory of God." This reference of our common actions to God, to honour Him who ordained them originally for their several ends and purposes, is to offer Him the prayer of praise, and to gain grace and merit for ourselves from our ordinary actions. And what is this but putting into practice the instruction of our Saviour, to pray always. "And He spoke also a parable to them that we ought always to pray" (Luke xviii, 1). To raise our life, then, from the level of nature and invest it with a supernatural character, it is necessary to order it to God, and this alone is prayer.

But there are many other reasons for prayer, both as to the natural and supernatural order. The breath of life, of supernatural religion, is prayer. Supernatural religion is the worship of God as He is made known to us by His word. And just as we come in touch with the world of nature by our senses, we come into touch with the supernatural world in which God reigns, by

raising up our mind from the things of the senses to the world above these. This abstraction of the mind from the things of sense around us and directing it to God and the supernatural, not for speculative purposes and enquiry but piously and religiously, is prayer. This contemplative prayer is habitual with the Saints and religious persons generally. To effect anything in this higher order we must ascend on the wings of prayer and by prayer, "make our petitions known to God." The whole trend of revealed religion in practice is towards prayer, and it depends on it as on an indispensable arm, both for support and efficiency. What else do we gather from the lives of Patriarchs and Prophets and all these men of God, who in times past were found ready to His hand when He would make known His mind and wishes to His people? Such as they were they became by the practice of prayer. What do we learn from the life of the Son of God Himself but the worth and influence of prayer, and the place assigned to it in the economy of Divine Providence? When even He wanted anything He did not command it, but He sought it from His Father by prayer. The Apostles regarded prayer as an indispensable means to success, and would be relieved of other duties so that they might have time to pray. "But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word" (Acts vi, 4). What breathing is to a man prayer is to the Church, and from the days of the Apostles and after their example her ministers in her name are ever pouring out her sentiments of adoration, thanksgiving, and praise, as well as sending up petitions for blessings of all sorts to the throne of mercy and grace.

In this way she pays the tribute of praise and honour due to the Divine Majesty, as well as acknowledges that God is the living source from whom all blessings come. And because it is due to Him as well as useful to the Church to make these professions and supplications, God would have her pray to Him at all times. What He could give unasked He gives, then, as the result of prayer —the Church fulfilling her proper function, and gaining the merit of her devotion. And it is the same with reference to our ordinary temporal wants.

After all the blessings God spontaneously bestows on all men there is ever room for much more to answer all our needs. These, or many of these it is His wish to give, but not otherwise than as the answer to our prayers. "So that men by asking may deserve to get what Almighty God decreed before all time to grant them" says St. Thomas (II, ii, Q 83, A 2), quoting St. Gregory. There are many things, therefore, that in the order of Providence will be granted, or granted in good measure, only as the result of prayer.

Hence was our Lord so urgent about Prayer. His repeated exhortations to pray cannot be well explained on any other basis, nor would He Himself have given such preference to this particular form of devotion but for the part it plays in the ways of Providence, and how necessary to avail of it if we would obtain what we want from God. For He has already decreed to give what we want, but not otherwise than as the result of prayer.

Will the prayer of petition, then, secure all we ask by it? One thing is certain at any rate, viz., that no one addresses himself to God with becoming dispositions

who is allowed to depart from His presence without His blessing. "At the voice of thy cry, as soon as He shall hear He will answer thee" (Isaias xxx, 19). Temporal things, however, which we may ask in prayer may not easily be reconciled at all times with our own or other people's higher interests. Such was the object of Our Saviour's petition when He prayed in the Garden. But, granted that our prayer is what it ought to be, "a petition of what is suitable," and granted besides the requisite dispositions, viz., a persevering, confiding, and humble prayer, such as the prayers of the devout poor generally are, we may be certain to receive what we pray for, or, something as good or better. The promises of our Lord stand for so much as this, and while He oftentimes urged the practice of prayer He never set bounds to our petitions. "If you ask the Father anything in My name," said He, "He will give it you" (John xvi, 23). Indeed the answer to our prayers is measured rather by the trust and confidence that inspires our petitions than by the greatness of the favour we ask from God. "If you shall say to this mountain take up, and cast thyself into the sea, it shall be done, and all things whatsoever you shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive" (Matt. xxi, 22). This doctrine our Saviour abundantly confirmed in practice. He filled the years of His public life with miracles, and if His Hand seemed shortened at any time it was not for want of power residing in it, or the extravagance of the requests people put before Him, but for the want of Faith in Him. "And He wrought not many miracles there because of their unbelief" (Matt. xiii, 51). No one, of course, "can know the mind of the Lord" (Rom.

xi), nor has the future ever delivered up its secrets to ordinary men, but in any event the course of things is safe in the hands of Him who can shape it, nor will it be disturbed beyond His correction, Who bends His omnipotence to the faith of His suppliants. If we come before God with an honest sense of our own demerits, and of His boundless goodness, and an undoubting confidence in His readiness to help us, we may ask anything we please and shall not ask in vain. There is no obstacle to virtue and grace that will not yield before humble, earnest, and persevering prayer. "Let us ask in faith nothing wavering" St. James (i, 6) tells us, and again he says "You ask and receive not because you ask amiss" (iv, 3).

Our Saviour says we should always pray (Luke xviii, 1). Whether constant prayer, as far as it is compatible with our other duties in life is useful only and not also necessary, there is no doubt that a sense of what we owe to God for the blessings of nature and grace obliges us to pray at regular stated times. Hence has Sunday, the first day of the week been set aside for prayer and religious duties. Free during that day from the ordinary occupations of life, people can devote their minds with less distraction to prayer and Divine worship. Morning and evening, the beginning and end of each recurring day, are very fitting occasions for certain appropriate prayers. Outside of these times, which sense and religion have ever consecrated to prayer, occasions that call for special help and light in the great crises of one's life, in times of serious dangers to soul or body, and in trouble and anxiety of all sorts, we should turn to God, our support and strength at all times, for His favouring

help. To fail in the practice of prayer is not alone to cut oneself off from the blessings of all kinds that come in answer to it, but to sin against a dictate of religion and nature, which urges us to seek the favour of God, to Whose Providence all things are subjected. To secure for prayer its effect and purpose we must approach it with recollection. Prayer is above all else an act of faith in God—a confession of His adorable Majesty, of His all-pervading presence, of His all-ruling Providence and His unfailing goodness. To make prayer expressive of all this the mind must be free of all preoccupation and filled instead with appropriate sentiments. In no other way, too, can distractions often so prejudicial to the effects of prayer be obviated, and responsibility for them be removed.

Nor are we at a loss as to how to address Almighty God in prayer. Our Lord has seen to this, and composed for us the prayer we are to say. And here, too, we are taught what dispositions of mind we should bring to prayer. It was intended for no special class of people. It was to be the prayer of mankind to their Creator. It was to be the prayer of the sinner and the saint, of the pious and the impious, and the one as the other when opening his lips to lay his mind before his Maker, is to address Him by the name of Father. "Our Father Who art in Heaven." Prayer is familiar converse with God. Our Saviour would have it in the case of all men the respectful but trustful address of a son to his father. We have many other prayers besides the Lord's Prayer. They suit the wants and changing humours of our minds. They are addressed, some of them to the Blessed Virgin, and some to the Saints, whose intercession we ask in

prayer. But in the Lord's Prayer we have all we want to say to God, and we say it in words best suited for the purpose ; and over it all there is the great and singular merit that it is the Lord's Prayer. What saving grace in this beautiful prayer alone ! It is a link binding the Creator in Heaven to His children on earth. Scattered over the face of the universe, and divided by leagues of ocean, and by yet more sundering differences of race, civilization, religion and virtue, with the prayer of their common Saviour on their lips they are brothers, and the children of the one God, the great Father in Heaven. St. Paul tells us when the Saviour cried, in the extremity of His torture, to His Father, He was heard for His reverence (Heb. v, 7). So the sound of that prayer from the lips of His children, breaking constantly on the ears of the Creator from all quarters of the world, for the sake of Him Who taught it to them, as for the manner of its address will draw down answering graces and blessings upon them. Saying it they salute Him as their Father, they bless His Name, they desire the reign of His law in the hearts of all ; they all would form one vast kingdom under His supreme sovereignty, and sensible of their unworthiness they turn in befitting humbleness to ask Him for the pardon of their sins, and all needful blessings for soul and body.

The Church has composed many other prayers for our use. The prayer in most favour is the Hail Mary. This we address to the Blessed Virgin, the Mother of God, at once to honour her, and to obtain the benefits of her intercession with God for us. Such is God's way in the distribution of his favours, viz., as far as possible, He employs the service of those who share more largely

His gifts in carrying His graces to those less deserving. The Hail Mary, as is well known, is composed of the Angelic Salutation and the words of St. Elizabeth. The Holy Mary was added by the Council of Ephesus, A.D. 431, after defining the dogma of the Divine Maternity. Both prayers together, since that date, form the address and petition of the Catholic people over the world, to her who is their Mother, because the Mother of the Saviour. The Hail Mary, the most popular of all prayers, is the best proof we can have of the different manner in which we approach even the highest and most favoured of God's creatures, when we pray to them, and how we address our petitions to God Himself. Of God we ask directly what we want; of the Blessed Virgin and the Saints the assistance of their prayers. These two prayers, the Our Father and the Hail Mary, with the Apostles' Creed and the Confiteor, should be said every morning and evening. We should begin the day with the Morning Offering, and end at night with the Act of Contrition. The Acts of Faith, Hope and Charity should be said regularly and often, for these are our chief duties to God.

Acting on the instructions and promises of our Saviour the prayers of the Church are presented to God in the Name of Jesus Christ. Nor is there a doubt as to what blessings come down upon the world continually in answer to the prayers that ascend like incense before the throne of grace from the lips of her ministers, and her Religious Communities. Founded by our Blessed Saviour, and endowed with such gifts to carry on the work of God among men, the Church has an acceptance with Him such as belongs to no one besides. Assisted

by her prayers, and above all by the Holy Sacrifice, which is daily offered upon so many Altars, and our own honest efforts, no one will experience an insuperable difficulty in observing the Commandments, and in advancing in the ways of virtue and grace.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

The Sacraments.

By prayer we place our wishes before God, and entreat His help in our needs. The scope of prayer is wide, and its objects manifold. By means of prayer we obtain many blessings, natural and supernatural, for ourselves and others. Nor can we render a more acceptable service to God than to turn to Him and ask Him for favours. But prayer, useful for so many purposes, is not our only means of grace. Our Lord instituted a more powerful means which He entrusted to His Church. This is what is called the Sacraments, which are seven in all. The Sacraments differ from prayer in this, among other respects, that whereas prayer is useful for all purposes, spiritual and temporal, the Sacraments are channels of grace strictly so called, and nothing else besides.

Among the many things lost to us by the "Fall," the foremost place is to be given to grace. Yet while it was not God's will to restore again, any of the lesser gifts,

however useful, that He had added to nature, that did not raise us above nature, He did will to restore grace again, which raises us to the supernatural state. Now this is the signal service done mankind by our Saviour, and possible only to Him, that by the sacrifice of His life in atonement for sin, and especially in atonement for Original sin, the primal source of all miseries, He merited grace again for us. "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John i, 17). And grace which He thus merited He made available largely by the Sacraments. The value of grace needs no further comment. The price paid to make it again available, after it had been forfeited, bespeaks its worth. And here again the goodness of God towards mankind is made manifest. For it was not alone to make atonement for our sins Christ was born, and suffered. It was not alone to offer satisfaction to God over against the dishonour to Him involved in sin, our Blessed Redeemer embraced the shame and dishonour of His Passion and Crucifixion. That was not all that was in the mind of the Eternal Father when He sent Him, nor in His own mind when He faced opprobrium and suffering. "God hath sent His Only Begotten Son into the world that we might live by Him" (John I, iv, 9). It was, as St. Paul puts it, (Gal. ii) that "He loved me and delivered Himself for me" (20), and hence "He blotted out the handwriting of the decree that was against us, that was contrary to us" (Gal. ii, 14). His aim, living and dying, was that "Where sin abounded grace might more abound." "That as sin hath reigned to death, so also grace might reign to justice unto life everlasting, through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. v, 20. 21).

In his Epistle to the Romans St. Paul contrasts grace with sin, the one brought into the world by Adam, the other by Jesus Christ. And He would have us understand that however widespread the sway of sin, grace, since the Redemption, is more plenteous and availing. And just as the light of heaven fills the whole world, dispelling the darkness and penetrating into every most secret place, so grace, radiating from its source, our Blessed Saviour, " Who enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world "(John i, 9), comes the way of all men. And just as the light which is spread abroad over the face of day glows with heat which causes nature to germinate, and life to spring up again after the death of winter when the sun shines out directly overhead, so grace, gathered up in the Sacraments, kindles charity in the souls that receive them, dispelling sin, our spiritual death, and quickening us again into the supernatural life. The aim and concern of our Blessed Redeemer, who made conquest of grace by His sufferings, as expressed in the language of the Prophet that " the wilderness shall rejoice and shall flourish like the lily " (Isaias xxv, 1), was to introduce into a world, desolate as the wilderness of the evidences of the supernatural, the fruits of virtue and grace in the lives and activities of the people. Hence did He found the Church, and the care with which He endowed it. Hence did He institute the Sacraments, a new thing in the world, whereby material elements charged with this divine influence convey it to the souls of those on whom they are conferred. And He instituted seven of these, manifesting thus so full a sense of our needs, and providing against them, whether in the great turning

points of our life, as in the wear and tear of daily experience.

Impatient that a moment of our individual existence should be spent empty of His friendship—that we should from the first day of our life enjoy the benefits of His life and death in our behalf—the day we are born into the world He would have us born to the supernatural life. When born to our natural life while unconscious of our existence He would have the stain of nature, the sin of Adam, washed away in the cleansing water of Baptism, making us thus from our birth children of God with the seal of God stamped upon us, and clothed with more than the royal robe of sanctifying grace. Then when the years of childhood are spent, and it comes that we have to go out from under the watchful eye of our parents, and the careful influences of home, and begin to mix with strangers and receive the impact of the world upon us, lest we falter in our allegiance under its baneful influences, He has ready another Sacrament for that critical time, a strengthening Sacrament, the Sacrament of Confirmation, and with it another seal marking us again among the crowds of men as His, ready to stand up for Him and for His interests and do battle for Him if need be. Then, and this is what is very surprising, and shows His great consideration for our frailty, when after those early years of grace, our awakening passions surprise us and we fall—fall from His friendship " not as the offence so also the gift " (Rom. v), He has prepared another Sacrament to cleanse that sin also. And not once, nor again, nor for seventy times seven times (Matt. xviii, 22), but for all the sins of our years, we may come and

are ever welcome, to seek the grace of reconciliation at the hands of His ministers in the Sacrament of Penance. And what kindness revealed in the manner of this sacrament! Sin is the death of the Soul. To bring us back again to live in His grace He would send us to His minister to tell him our sins—to show him our wounds—to make known to him our weaknesses, and to learn from his paternal wisdom the ways of security in future! How shall we describe the next Sacrament? To say it is bread from Heaven like the Manna of the wilderness, or like the Paschal Lamb of the Passover, is merely to recall weak symbols and faint foreshadowings. To say that it is the food of the soul enabling us to grow in the life of the spirit is all very true of course. But does all that, or any of that, suggest the reality behind the veils of the Blessed Eucharist, or open up a way to understand why our Saviour Himself would visit personally every soul old enough to realize His presence, and pay him recognition how faint soever? The Blessed Sacrament, more than all else tells of the divine nature of grace, in that It fits us to be the associates of the Divinity itself. After all this when the time comes for us to leave the world for good and go into the next life, when the languor and weariness of coming death weigh heavy upon us, and questionings of life issues come up to trouble us, mindful of the sadness that fell upon His own soul when, sorrowful unto death, He besought a word of comfort from men who could not understand him, He has ready a comforting balsam in the oil of unction, which, cleansing from every organ of sense all trace of sin, fits us, refreshed in grace, to appear in judgment before Him. Then to

make mortal men fit for the functions of so divine a ministry; to make it true that at their word the bonds of sin are burst in the soul held captive, and the power of Satan brought to nought in one of the victims of his wiles, is to exercise a power proper to God Himself. But further still, to make the Saviour Himself in His throne in Heaven obedient to a weak man's word, and bring Him down again, as if by a new Incarnation; to subject the Creator to the creature, making God do the will of man, as happens every day when the sacred words of the Holy Sacrifice are spoken on a thousand altars—this power, which the Sacrament of Orders confers, shows the boundless, almost deifying influence of grace. Then "to restore all things in Christ," to bring man and woman the true complement of each other for domestic society and happiness, to bring the heads of the family to something like the grace and innocence of Eden, so that the race if fallen, would be sanctified again at its source, marriage has the grace and dignity of a Sacrament imparted to it. These, the blessings our Saviour has given to the world He redeemed! They tell us how truly He has restored us again to the inheritance of grace which we had lost, how fully He has raised us up again in fact and truth to the supernatural state. These Seven Sacraments, no more, no less, and no others, the Church has recognized. These she has used from the very beginning and administered to the Faithful. And her teaching and faith in reference to them she has explicitly declared in those words of the Council of Trent, "If any one should say that the Sacraments of the New Law were not all instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ, or

are more or less than seven, i.e., Baptism, Confirmation, Blessed Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Orders, and Matrimony, or that any of these seven is not a true and proper Sacrament let him be anathema " (Sess. 7, C. i).

There are certain features of the Sacraments and proper to them which it is well to notice. As we have said already they have all a common origin. They are of divine institution. Our Saviour is the Author of them, but He instituted them not all at once but as the development of His sacred ministry made it opportune. The purpose for which they were instituted shows that we can trace them to no other source. The end and purpose of the Sacraments is to give us grace. " The Sacraments of the New Law contain grace, and impart it to all who receive them worthily " (*Council of Florence* and *Council of Trent*, Sess. 7, C. 6). Now grace is the property of our Saviour. He gained it at a great price. It is also the one thing that can free the soul from sin On this account He laid down His life to purchase it. Grace therefore is His gift. And grace is available for the souls that He redeemed after the manner that appeared to Him most suitable. If it is to be had therefore in the Church, if her ministers dispense it, if available through the Sacraments ; all this is so, because so it appeared good to Him. And when St. Peter in his second Epistle tells us that by grace we became in some way participators in the divine nature, we can understand that grace is something above the control and disposal of men : that their highest function is to be ministers of it, exercising such offices in reference to it as its Author may have

appointed for them. The value and importance of the Sacraments, therefore, is the place they hold in the ministration of grace. As we know already, the dispensation of grace is not limited to the Sacraments. What we mean is this, they are instituted organs of grace, and there are certain ends and purposes in our higher life attainable only by the reception of one or other of them. Designed for men, and for men's use, they are instituted under forms the use of which comes natural and easy to us. The elements of nature are made serviceable for this high spiritual purpose—to carry grace to us. And in this we trace at once the hand of the Creator. He, Who by His word alone, made all things in the beginning, and by the breathing of His Spirit over the face of lifeless matter made life to come (Gen. ii), takes the elements of nature now and adapting them to a higher purpose makes them vehicles of grace to our souls, animating us with the higher and diviner life which grace awakens in us. But these elements have not been chosen anyhow—without a purpose. They are emblematic in every case of the effects the Sacraments produce (*Council of Trent.* Sess. 7). Baptism, for instance, cleanses us from sin. Hence water is used in the administration of Baptism. When a priest baptizes he pours water on the head of the person who receives the Sacrament. And as water poured out cleanses what it is poured upon, so would the Author of Baptism indicate the interior cleansing of the soul from original sin by the grace infused as the water and the words of Baptism fall on the subject of the Sacrament. The Blessed Eucharist is the food that sustains our spiritual life. Hence it is given to us

under the form of bread. As bread is the food of nature for our corporal life, as we ask in the words of our Saviour for our daily bread to enable us to live, so would He teach us that the spiritual life of the soul is maintained and nourished by the Blessed Sacrament which He would give us under the form of our corporal food. And so on, more or less distinctly, do all the Sacraments by the elements that compose them indicate the spiritual effects produced on all who receive them worthily. For they are not alone the cause, but the signs of grace. And they give not alone sanctifying but actual grace also. Indeed we may say that because they give actual grace there are seven Sacraments. Sanctifying grace does one thing and one thing alone, that is, it sanctifies the soul and makes it pleasing to God. This one effect is common to all the Sacraments. But the actual graces of each of the Sacraments are widely different both from it and from each other. These, in each case, are the special helps each of the Sacraments is designed to give. And as the helps which Penance gives to a sinner struggling with his passions and trying to subdue them, is very different from what Confirmation which strengthens us in faith, confers upon us; so of the others, the actual graces of the different Sacraments are different in every case.

The Sacraments are constituted in their various natures by the " Form " or the words used by the minister when administering them. "*Accedit verbum ad elementum et fit Sacramentum*" said St. Augustine. " The word is applied to the matter and a Sacrament is made." Water is poured out for various purposes. When the words "I baptize thee " are addressed to the

person on whose head the water is poured, the purpose of the process declares its nature. Such pouring of water is now the Sacrament of Baptism. Somewhat, as, when giving something to another the words one uses show whether it is a gift, a loan, or payment of a debt, so the words employed in the administration of the Sacraments indicate the nature of the operation. But they do more. They make the process a Sacramental operation, raising the elements and action employed to the rank and nature of a Sacrament. No such efficiency attaches to any words accompanying the conveyance of anything to another. In every other instance the words merely indicate the nature of the act. In the case of the Sacraments they effect what we say. "He spoke and they were made," said the Psalmist speaking of the Creation. Man now speaks but with the power of God, and the elements are Sacraments charged with grace for him who receives them.

Some Sacraments are more necessary than others. Some are for one class like the Sacrament of Orders. Some for another like Matrimony. But one Sacrament is essential for all, the Sacrament of Baptism. Baptism is instituted to cleanse us from original sin, and as that sin is universal over the race, "No one is free from stain, not even the infant whose life is but a day upon the earth," even infants have to receive baptism. Three Sacraments imprint a mark upon the soul and those cannot be repeated, viz., Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders (*Council of Trent.* Sess. vii, Canon. 9). The others in certain circumstances may be repeated. Penance and Holy Eucharist may

be received daily. The nature of the Sacrament and the purpose for which it was instituted explain in a measure if it may be received more than once and how frequently. Two of them are called Sacraments of the Dead, i.e., not requiring sanctifying grace in the person that receives them and conferring it upon him. These are Baptism and Penance which were instituted purposely to remove sin from the soul by introducing sanctifying grace. All the others are called Sacraments of the living, and these pre-suppose sanctifying grace in the person that receives them. To receive one of these conscious of grievous sin is to profane the Sacrament and a sacrilege. For the Sacraments confer grace, not mechanically or automatically, but in accordance with the dispositions of the persons that receive them. When sanctifying grace, then, is a pre-requisite for the reception, to receive them without grace is to frustrate the Sacraments, and a profanation of them. But this does not hold in the case of Extreme Unction in certain circumstances as will be explained in its proper place.

We cannot hold the Sacraments in too high a place in our respect and reverence. They are the pledges to everyone of the devoted interest of our Blessed Saviour in us. They bring to us what is most sacred and divine, and this wrapped around in symbols most simple and familiar to us. They bear to us what is incompatible with serious sin. They make us dear to God, and valuable above all price in His sight. They bring a happiness, too, that is substantial, and satisfying above all happiness, and they are the promise, not a vain and delusive promise, but an assurance of the happiness

hereafter which is the lot of the blessed. They mark us as the children of God at our birth, and as becomes sons so highly born, they are our support and strength through our years. They attend us at death, and deprive that visitant of most of its terrors, and they light our steps in the broad spaces of eternity to the feet of our Creator, and secure, at His hands, the gift of perfect and unchanging felicity. How we should cherish and venerate the Sacraments! How we should receive them! How we should learn all there is to learn about each of them!

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Baptism.

What is Baptism?

"Baptism is a Sacrament that cleanses us from Original Sin, makes us Christians and children of God, and heirs to the kingdom of Heaven." The opening of the heavens at the Baptism of our Saviour in the Jordan at the beginning of His Public Life was the first indication given to the world that their original inheritance would soon be available for men, and that the way to it was by Baptism. It will be noted that in defining Baptism we are speaking the language of Faith. We have no ocular demonstration, no evidence to sense or reason of the effects that Baptism produces in the soul, or what change

it brings about in our relations with God. It is not like the Church a public institution that is visible in its members—manifest in its activities. Baptism is given to the infant of yesterday, and its effects are hidden away in the soul of the child, hidden as the soul itself. But what of that? Is not half the business of life dependent on faith of some kind? What ocular or other proof have I that such a man—a stranger—is a medical man let us say, or that he came from the antipodes as he states? In a thousand things we act on slender evidence indeed, nor is there time to test half what passes current among men. At best we have moral certainty and human credibility and credence, and we are content with that. It is so different with the Faith. Baptism and everything connected with it is vouched for by the Church. It is her teaching during the ages. It is no accident of yesterday. We trace it up to the Apostles, we pursue it beyond them till we come to that hour, now nearly two thousand years ago, when our Saviour, speaking to the Jewish Ruler, Nicodemus, told him that Baptism or a new birth, difficult though it may be to realize it, is the condition on which a man can see the kingdom of God: "Amen I say to thee, unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John iii, 5). Just as worldly affairs have their conditions, and powers and faculties for action demand appropriate qualifications in the agents, so with spiritual things also, with this difference, that in spiritual matters we are founded on the "rock which is Christ" (I Cor. x, 7), whose word cannot fail, guaranteed to us as it is with divine safeguards in the teaching of the Church. But though we cannot test

the effects of Baptism in the soul, or have proofs of its benefits, we are not without indications of these in the nature of Baptism itself apart from the positive teaching of our Lord delivered to His Apostles and ever maintained in the Church. To help our faith in its cleansing efficacy it is given in the pouring out of water, the natural and necessary effect of which is to cleanse whatever it is poured out upon. And so our Saviour, Who would not deprive us of the merit of the service of God by Faith, went as far as was possible without prejudice to the integrity and perfection of Faith, to show the truth of what we are to believe. And what is true of Baptism is true of the other Sacraments. They are instituted signs of the grace and effects they produce, as a help to our belief in, and understanding of, the use and purpose they serve.

The first thing to notice about Baptism is its necessity. In sending out the Apostles to preach the Gospel, our Lord made the reception of Baptism equally necessary with the Faith. As they were to make converts they were to baptize them: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved: but he that believeth **not** shall be condemned" (Mark xvi). For those who do not believe, there is no question of Baptism. They shall be condemned in any case. Nor is it enough to believe. Baptism with Faith is the condition of Salvation: "Who believes and is baptized shall be saved." And whether the Apostles made converts by the thousand (Acts ii), or only in individual instances (Acts xvi), they baptized them in every case. The necessity of baptism is strikingly illustrated in the case of St. Paul. At the vision granted

to him on the road to Damascus (Acts ix) he not alone received the faith but the grace of charity also, and therefore forgiveness for his sins. That whole-hearted surrender of himself to Christ expressed in the words "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" meant the unreserved dedication of himself to the service of the Saviour. That is, it was an act of the perfect love of God. Yet even he whose sins were consumed in the fire and fervour of his charity was ordered to be baptized: "Rise up and be baptized and wash away thy sins" (Acts xxii, 1, 6) was the official direction given him by Ananias to whom he was sent by our Saviour for instruction. There is an efficacy therefore in baptism not to be found in the love of God. There is a work assigned to it in the New Dispensation which nothing else can accomplish. Not even St. Paul would our Saviour dispense from Baptism. Nor would He substitute any action of His own in his case to supply its place.

It goes without saying that Baptism gives grace. But whether an inference or not, it is the doctrine of faith defined by the Church in the Council of Florence, and again by the Council of Trent. But it does more. The language of the Scriptures referring to Baptism implies more than grace. Our Lord describes it as a new birth. "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost" (John iii, 5). There is a substantial transformation of the whole man implied in that strong expression. St. Paul speaks of those who had been baptized as persons whose manner of life, and whose outlook in life had been altogether changed. "For we were buried together with Him by Baptism into death, that as Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we

also may walk in newness of life" (Rom. vi, 4). The Apostle would indicate that to be baptized is to die to one's former manner of life. To end it for good and to rise to a new life as Christ rose from the dead, and to walk henceforth "in newness of life." Now for these ends baptism gives special helps. Instituted specially to cleanse us from original sin it clears away all traces of that sin from the soul, and clothing the soul with grace, it corrects, as it is designed to do, the tendencies to evil, as St. Thomas teaches (3. A. 37), which are one of the the effects of original sin. As that sin was the prime cause of the Incarnation, and as the Sacrifice of Calvary was the atonement for it, the manner in which the fruits of that atoning sacrifice are applied to the destruction of original sin in every soul is a matter of supreme importance. Now this is precisely the part assigned to Baptism. Washing us in the water of Baptism, or "the laver of regeneration" as St. Paul calls it (Titus iii, 5), to which Christ has given a sacramental efficacy, the fruits of Redemption are communicated to the soul to the destruction of Original Sin in it. Hence the regeneration effected by Baptism. Now regeneration means more than mere cleansing from Original Sin. That was always possible by Grace. It means a nearer approach to the original innocence of Adam, than was possible before the Saviour, and the capacity for higher things than men could attain before. Hence the Character or Mark which Baptism imprints, and which remains in the soul for ever. It is this Character or capacity that makes us capable of the other Sacraments, and of receiving the benefits they were instituted to confer. And hence had St. Paul to be baptized, destined as he

was for the Episcopate and the Apostolate, the highest offices under the dispensation of grace.

The image of the Creator that was blurred, if not altogether blotted out in the soul, is brought out afresh by this Sacrament, administered as it is in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Hence are the baptized from being by nature "children of wrath" (Ep. ii, 3), made the children of God. "For you are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, for as many of you as have been baptized in Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. iii, 26, 27). Having made us His own by the graces of Baptism from the merits of redemption, He stamps His own seal upon us, which marks the baptized as His for ever. By Baptism, then, Christ takes possession one by one of those for whose redemption He paid the price, and passes them on under His sign manual among His followers. That is, by Baptism we become members of the Church, which is the kingdom of God upon earth. The great idea in the mind of the Saviour was the setting up of this kingdom. When He preached the Gospel He was actually engaged upon it. "He travelled through the cities and towns, preaching and evangelizing the kingdom of God" (Luke viii, 1). St. Paul tells us that Christ loved the Church and delivered Himself up for it, that He might sanctify it, cleansing it by the laver of water in the word of life, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Ep. v, 27). And again he says in another place, "He gave Himself up for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity and might cleanse to

Himself a people acceptable, a pursuer of good works" (Titus ii, 14). Sending out His Apostles to gather together this people, He recalled the conditions announced at the opening of His ministry for membership of His following, and He ordered them to preach and to baptize, "Going, preach the Gospel to every creature, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. xxviii). And so this right that gives grace interiorly, cleansing the soul from sin, outwardly aggregates those on whom it is performed to that body which is the Church or the kingdom of God upon earth. And as the Church grew into being in the days of the Apostles by the preaching of the Gospel, and by Baptism, so has it grown and spread out over the world ever since. When St. Patrick preached the faith to our forefathers, and they became Christian, he sealed their faith in his teaching by Baptism, and so made them members of the Church. When St. Francis in India and the East added provinces to the Church, his practice was the same, and to-day when the missionary carries the Gospel to the heathen, the time-honoured and only recognized method that has come down from the Apostolic times, made sacred by Apostolic usage, employed by him, is Baptism, to make them members of the Church of God.

But Baptism is not, and never was given as a matter of course to those to whom the Gospel is preached. It was never a question of preaching and hearing the Gospel, but a question of believing it, "Lord, who hath believed our report" (Rom. x, 16), said the great preacher St. Paul. To him "that believeth and is baptized" is the promise of salvation. And so when

the Church the first day grew by the thousand under the hands of the Apostles stretched out over the people baptizing them, it was only over those who had qualified first for Baptism by Faith. When "the man of great authority under Candace, the Queen of the Ethiopians," who was joined on the way by Philip, requested to be baptized after being instructed, "if thou believest with all thy heart thou mayest" answered Philip. And only when he professed "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" did Philip come down from the chariot and baptize him (Act. viii). And so Baptism presupposes Faith as an essential condition for its reception and is the formal recognition by the Church of the possession of the Faith by those who are admitted to it. For, as is well known, the Church or the kingdom of God on earth is not like the kingdoms of the world,—societies of men bound together in an organized system requiring little more than outward submission to law and respect for public authority. The Church means all that too in its own sphere, but it means besides, the interior adherence of faith to all that it teaches as the word of God, on the part of all the Faithful, and the profession of all this in the outward practices of the religion of Christ. And so Baptism or the solemn rite instituted by Christ Himself, and administered in the name of the three Divine Persons of the Blessed Trinity, that makes us members of the Church, makes us free of all its hopes and promises. It is the first and in one sense, the greatest of the Sacraments, because of its wonderful effects on the recipient and because it is the gateway to the kingdom of God.

And because we are by nature "children of wrath," as every child of Adam is stained with original sin at its birth, even children have to be baptized. There is all the more reason for infant baptism because of the danger of their never coming to the use of reason. And as they sinned by another, i.e., Adam, it is but right that the faith which is a necessary condition for Baptism may be supplied by another, i.e., the Church in their behalf (*Council of Trent*, Sess. vii, Canon 13, on Baptism). And as obligations are contracted in the name of children by their friends, and the rights of children are vindicated by others in their name, so do sponsors at Baptism profess the faith in their behalf, and promise the performance of the duties afterwards which the profession of the faith entails. Hence the duty of sponsor implies the obligation of seeing after the proper instruction of the children in the teaching of the faith where necessary, and the duty of the child when come to the use of reason, to ratify the promises made in its behalf at Baptism and to make open profession of the faith (*Council of Trent*, Sess. vii, Canon 14) According to the new Code, one person or two at most, nominated by the priest or parents, and a practical Catholic lay person rightly instructed in religion, and ordinarily fourteen years of age, is qualified for this office. It is necessary for the sponsor to touch the child at least while it is being baptized or immediately after. There is a spiritual relation contracted by the sponsor with the child for whom he acted in that capacity in case of solemn Baptism. In case the child is privately baptized this relationship is not contracted unless the sponsor at Baptism

answers for the child when the ceremonies are afterwards supplied in the Church (Canon 762—769).

Given for Original Sin, which is removed once for all, Baptism can be received but once. Besides, the "Character" which it imprints remains for ever, and so excludes the possibility of a repetition of the Sacrament.

But Baptism removes, not Original Sin only, but actual sin if present also. And so great is the grace given with Baptism that it not alone remits actual sin but all the punishment that may be the consequence of it. By Baptism one dies to sin with Christ, and receives in himself the effect of the death of Christ, which is atonement enough, and to spare, for all the sins of the world. Hence no further satisfaction is needed for the sins so blotted out (*Council of Trent*, Sess. XIV, cap. 2). In that case, of course, one must be penitent. For, as is well known, one must go back on one's sins in repentance to obtain forgiveness from God.

The official minister of Baptism is the Priest, and according to the law of the Church, he alone, or any other Priest with his permission licitly baptizes who is Priest of the Parish to which the parents of the child, or the person himself to be baptized belongs. In case of necessity, anyone who uses the Matter and Form of the Sacrament correctly can, and may baptize. As Baptism is necessary for all, all are capable of conferring it. In the circumstances when anyone may baptize, only the bare essentials of the Sacrament are necessary. That is one pours the water, i.e. natural water, on the head repeating while doing so "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." If

any person so baptized survives, the ceremonies omitted have to be supplied, not indeed for the validity of the Sacrament, for that is already secured, but for the purposes and effects of the prayers, and the rite generally that surrounds the administration of the Sacrament. Indeed the administration of no other Sacrament is attended with so much ceremony as Baptism, and with good reason. For in certain ways no Sacrament produces such effects, or effects so great and so sensible a change. For whether a man comes to be baptized from heresy, with its attendant uncertainty of religious belief that is so dissatisfying, or worse still from the want of all religious belief, as is sometimes the case, such conditions of mind give place after Baptism to the calm composure of faith in the full revelation of God, which is the common inheritance of Catholics, and is quite unknown outside the Church. For if Baptism requires the faith as a pre-requisite for its reception, it confers and strengthens it also. Besides, in adult Baptism together with the personal sins of the neophite, the sin that affected his whole nature with its attendant disabling consequences is washed away, and one rises up from the water of Baptism regenerated indeed—a new man. Not without much appropriate and significant ceremony, therefore, does the Church surround so great a Sacrament.

Not since the day of Pentecost has the sense of the Church, as to the nature of Baptism, and its absolute necessity for all men, altered in the least. Popes have decreed and Councils have defined her teaching in general and in detail, as necessity arose. But one thing is noticeable, her teaching and practice in this matter

are ever the self-same, and the prince and the peasant have both alike to receive on their heads the water of this Sacrament on penalty of eternal damnation. The instructions addressed in recent years; and especially the rules of the New Code for those who attend at childbirth, urging renewed care in administering this Sacrament in case of danger, show the mind of the Church on the dependence of the eternal welfare of the child on the reception of this Sacrament (canon 747). And while it opens heaven to the dying infant, and gains admission for it to the society of the Blessed after death, it makes those who remain in a real sense children of God, with the hope and promise of sharing His happiness one day in His eternal kingdom. To them it means a great reality. It means a form of life based on a high beginning, "The foundations thereof are in the Holy Mountain" (Ps. 86), of Faith, and Hope, and Charity, for all these are conferred at Baptism. It means membership of the Church of which the Head and Founder is the world's Saviour. It means the public profession of His teaching and principles. It means irreconcilable opposition to the principles that run counter to the Gospel. It means a fixed resolution to govern and subdue the passions that war against the spirit. It means the hope of God's favour and friendship in this life, and the expectation of the felicity after death, which the Redeemer died to make possible for mortals. For all this Baptism equips us. What remains to make success assured is supplied by the other Sacraments, and our own patient and generous efforts.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Confirmation.

What is Confirmation ?

" Confirmation is a Sacrament by which we receive the Holy Ghost, and which makes us strong and perfect Christians and soldiers of Jesus Christ." By Baptism we become members of the Church and sharers in the privileges and graces with which she is endowed. Among the most remarkable of these is the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. Our Saviour gave repeated assurance of His coming to His Apostles. It was perfectly clear to Him that without the abiding help and presence of the Holy Ghost it was idle to hope for the success of the Church, or that the Apostles would succeed in establishing it. The Gospel had too little to recommend it to men who were little capable of appreciating its principles and its aims. A Gospel of sacrifice and spiritual ideals could make but small impression in the hands of ordinary men addressing a people who were steeped in worldliness, and corrupt at heart. Even to the Jews the Gospel was an unwelcome message. The experience Our Saviour had gained when He addressed the Jewish multitudes made it abundantly clear to Him that if the Gospel was to make conquest of the world, as He intended it should, it must be reinforced by a power that is above the power of men. An influence must go with it that will enlighten the mind to see and appreciate its truth and worth, and incline men's hearts and strengthen men's wills for the sacrifices necessary for embracing it and making it their rule of life. Hence as He, the

Second Divine Person, came to announce it in the first instance, He would send the Holy Ghost, the Third Divine Person, " to make it to prosper in the things for which He sent it " (Isaias lv, 11). And herein lies the strength of the Church. The acceptance of her teaching, and constancy in the profession and practice of the faith, are the effects of the presence of the Holy Ghost. For He came, not to the teachers of the Gospel only, but to those also to whom their teaching is addressed. The Apostles had evidence of this at an early date in their ministry. At the Baptism of Cornelius we read : " While Peter was yet speaking these words the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the word, and the faithful of the circumcision who came with Peter were astonished for that the grace of the Holy Ghost was poured out upon the Gentiles also. For they heard them speaking with tongues and magnifying God. Then Peter answered : " Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we ? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ " (Acts. x, 47, 48). But the action of the Apostles on those who had received the Holy Ghost as well as themselves did not end with baptizing them. They would give them the grace of baptism and enrol them among the faithful. But they would do more. They would administer now another Sacrament that would strengthen and confirm them in the faith received. For they must not alone possess the faith but must also profess it. For this they would give them the Sacrament of Confirmation, by which the faithful receive the Holy Ghost. Mention is not made of this in the passage above quoted, for there

St. Peter is but explaining how it was made known to him that the partition that had separated Jew from Gentile was broken down under the New Dispensation—that it was no longer those who were the people of God and those who were not His people (Rom. ix, 25), for that the grace of the Holy Ghost was henceforth for the Gentile as well as for the Jew. The administration of this Sacrament is mentioned in another place in the Acts, where we are told that " When the Apostles who were in Jerusalem had heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John, who when they were come, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost. For He was not yet come upon any of them, but they were only baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid their hands upon them and they received the Holy Ghost (Acts. viii, 14, 17).

There is a similar passage in the life of St. Paul bearing upon this matter also. Having come at one time in his missionary travels to the city of Ephesus, and finding some disciples there, he inquired " Have you received the Holy Ghost since you believed ?" They said, " We have not so much as heard whether there be a Holy Ghost," and they were not even yet baptized. " Having heard these things they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, and when Paul had imposed his hands upon them the Holy Ghost came upon them and they spoke with tongues and prophesied " (Acts. xix, 6). The action of St. Peter and St. John in the one case, and indeed of the Apostles at Jerusalem who sent them, and of St. Paul in the other, indicate what place was understood by the Apostles to be assigned to the

Holy Ghost in reference to those who had received the faith and had been baptized. They prayed that the Holy Ghost would be sent to them ; their only concern about those who had recently come to believe is if they had yet received the Holy Ghost, and when they find that He has not yet been given to them, both Apostles—the two chiefs of the Apostles—perform severally the same rite of imposing hands upon them, and directly they received the Holy Ghost. To have already received the faith was not enough. To be baptized was not sufficient. The Holy Ghost had yet to be received by the ordinary faithful before that perfection of faith was reached which all who had come to the Church were supposed to possess. And just as the Apostles themselves before they received the Holy Ghost were weak and unstable, but grew strong and confident and became preachers of the faith to others the moment they received the Holy Ghost, so were they now solicitous for the faith of the Neophites until they also had received the same Divine Spirit. Nor were they at a loss as to how this grace was to be secured for them. Both resort to the same rite—a rite that was never in use before—of imposing their hands upon them, and directly the Holy Ghost is given to them. Now this rite, which is thus traced up to the Apostles, by which the Holy Ghost is given to the faithful, is what is known in the Church as the Sacrament of Confirmation. The name of Confirmation is not given to it in the first ages. Nor is it called a Sacrament. But from the days of the Apostles down through the early centuries, and from these on through the succeeding ages mention is made of this rite by which the Holy Ghost is given to the Faithful, and it has been

in use by the successors of the Apostles, the Bishops of the Church, from the first. "Those who are baptized have to be presented to the Bishops to receive by our prayers and imposition of hands the Holy Ghost," wrote St. Cyprian (A.D. 250): exactly what we find in the case of the Apostles for the same purpose and with the same result. St. Augustine, on the Trinity, Book xv, says: "The Apostles did not give the Holy Ghost but they prayed that He might come on those on whom they imposed hands, which practice the Church preserves to this day in her Bishops." It was not then a practice copied from the example of the Apostles which a Bishop might exercise or not, according to his pleasure. It was an official action which the Church retained and which her Bishops had to exercise in her name. St. Jerome says: "Those who have been baptized by the priests in the towns and villages receive the Holy Ghost by the hands of a Bishop, as we learn on the authority of the Apostles" (Dialogue against Luceferianos). The same is to be found repeatedly among all more recent writers until we come to the express teaching of those Councils that declared officialy the doctrine of the Church in this matter. In the Council of Florence, speaking of Confirmation, Pope Eugenius IV says: "In it the Holy Ghost is given to strengthen, as He was given to the Apostles on the day of Pentecost, so that the Christian would boldly confess the name of Christ. "And so up and down the centuries the great outstanding figures in the Church make mention of Confirmation by which the Holy Ghost is given to the faithful at the hands of the Bishop. By this means, as St. Thomas teaches (*Dis.* v), "Their faith is strengthened and they receive perfection of spiritual

life " (Pt. iii, Q. 72). It is to be noticed that the coming of the Holy Ghost by Confirmation is not like a passing visit which may or may not be attended by lasting results. Confirmation, like the other sacraments that are received only once, produces effects that are of their nature enduring. And though it does not stamp the same with the gift of a strengthened faith in such a way as to become as it were, identified with it and that may not be weakened again or lost, it gives a fullness and a strength that are the special effects of this Sacrament. It gives an inclination to the will towards the things of faith, and it gives a title moreover to assistance wherever dangers to the faith might threaten or be present, so that these may fall harmlessly on the strengthened Christian spirit.

The Apostles regarded the giving of Confirmation as their own special function. For this reason they sent down Peter and John to Samaria, where Philip the Deacon had preached with much success and had baptized many. And St. Paul, who would not spend his time baptizing, " For Christ sent me not to baptize but to preach the Gospel " (1 Cor. i), and commissioned others to do it, gave Confirmation as a matter of course (Acts. xix, 6). Hence the Church taught at all times that Confirmation is the special function of a Bishop, and consistently acted on that assumption. The authors quoted above are indicative of this, but her teaching was declared officially by Pope Eugenius IV at the Council of Florence, when he said " The ordinary minister of Confirmation is the Bishop ", and the Council of Trent says anathema to anyone that would hold " That the Bishop alone is not the ordinary minister of Confirm-

ation" (Sess. viii, can 3). And so what in the early ages is described as the "Imposition of the hands of the Bishop or the anointing of Sacred Chrism, "who are anointed with unction of the Sacred Chrism" (*Origen*), is called the Sacrament of Confirmation in later times, and is so named ever since.

Though the Bishop is the ordinary minister of Confirmation this does not imply that the fullness of power conferred on the Head of the Church does not include the faculty of giving authority to a priest to confer this Sacrament. And on occasions the Holy See has so acted. St. Gregory the Great did so in his day. Writing to a Bishop he says: "Where there is no Bishop we grant that a priest might anoint the baptized on the forehead with Chrism" (Lib. iv, Ep. 9). The exercise of this faculty is not unknown in later times. In answer to a petition from America "That the faithful living in many dangers may no longer be deprived of the Sacrament of Confirmation" Pope Pius VI granted to Fr. Carroll, afterwards the first Bishop in the United States, power to administer Confirmation. In missionary countries where the outposts of the Church are being daily extended, it is usual for the Holy See to give this faculty to Vicars Apostolic or such dignitaries for Catholics within their territory until the Hierarchy is regularly established in these parts. (*New Code*, C. 782). It has to be noted, however, that the Chrism used in the administration of this Sacrament has always to be consecrated by a Bishop (*New Code*, C. 781).

The reception of Confirmation, though a regular part of Church discipline and practice, from the first days was never regarded as a matter of such vital necessity

as Baptism. A distinct Sacrament in itself it perfects what was begun by Baptism. And just as nature tends to bring everything that comes into existence to its due perfection in its proper time, so the supernatural life of grace which begins in Baptism, is brought to perfection by the Sacrament of Confirmation. It was instituted by Our Saviour for conferring the Holy Ghost upon each of the faithful, and with this Divine Person, those gifts which furnish out the soul that has been, by Divine arrangement, the dwelling of the Holy Spirit. Hence wrote St. Cornelius, Pope, A.D. 260: "If one has not been thus counter-signed by the Bishop, how is he to receive the Holy Ghost?" And St. Isidore says: "As in Baptism we receive remission of sin, so by the unction of Confirmation we receive the sanctification of the Holy Ghost" (*De Officiis Eccles.*).

Then when we remember that "The just man liveth by faith" (Gal. iii), and not by sense, i.e., not conforming himself to the world and its maxims, that are borne in upon him by every wind, on every side, and at all times, it is easy to recognize how indispensable is this Sacrament to enable men to be better than their surroundings, and to live up to the higher standard of faith that is so often either not possessed at all, or is ignored in practice by those who have made peace with the world. This is much more true when unbelief is rife and the fashion is altogether against the faith. In any case Our Lord, Who instituted nothing that was not called for, either by the condition of people themselves, or of the society from which His followers were to be gathered, when He gave us the Sacrament of Confirmation we may take it that He did so because it is necessary as the source of

that strong and active faith which is requisite to enable us to live unaffected by the worldliness and unbelief that in varying degrees are ever present with us. Now to combat this spirit in oneself is a victory not of reason or sense but of faith. " This is the victory which overcometh the world: our faith (St. John, 1st Ep. v). And one of the abiding wonders in every age of Christian times is to find men and women who live in the midst of the world and are not of it, who are led by the higher light and the higher principles of Faith, and who know how to keep themselves, after the advice of the Apostle St. James, unspotted from this world " (C. ii). To this end the Sacrament of Confirmation powerfully contributes. For this indeed was it instituted, for it gives us the spirit of God and the power in consequence of appreciating the things of God, and living up to that appreciation. And what is living up to that appreciation, but to profess Christ and His teaching, a profession which He requires of all His followers in the face of the world under penalty of being denied by Him hereafter, as being none of His (Matt. x). " He that shall deny Me before men I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven." Hence as after coming into life one has to grow and develop the latent powers that come with his birth, so as to act the part of a man in the maturity of his years, so after the regeneration of Baptism, by which we are born to the supernatural life, we have to await the development of Confirmation, which strengthens and matures the early gifts of faith, and enables us to act the part of men in the exercises and activities of full Christian manhood, in whatever circumstances our life is cast. And hence, said an early Pope, St. Urban: " All the faithful

to become perfect Christians should receive the Holy Ghost by the imposition of the hands of the Bishop," and so to be enabled to make open profession of the Faith they receive in Baptism.

As a Sacrament Confirmation has its own appropriate "Matter" and "Form," both indicative in some degree of the effects it produces. Chrism, or oil of olives mixed with balsam and blessed by the Bishop, as we have it from the oldest writers, and the constant teaching and practice of the Church is the matter of this Sacrament. "Chrism consecrated by the Bishop can be used by a Bishop only to give the Holy Ghost, the Paraclete" (Innocent I Ep. ad. Decent.), and the Council of Florence says: "The second Sacrament is Confirmation, the matter of which is Chrism, made of oil which signifies the brightness of a good conscience, and balsam the odour of a good name." For as the Apostle says by good conduct "We are the good odour of Christ" (2 Cor. ii, 15). Giving Confirmation the Bishop, when he anoints the forehead with Chrism, says, "I sign thee with the sign of the Cross, and I confirm thee with the Chrism of salvation, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." These words are the "Form" of Confirmation, as the same Council of Florence tells us. Previous to anointing with Chrism the Bishop holds out his hands, and prays that the Holy Ghost may descend upon those who are to be confirmed, just as the Apostles did, and this, as the New Code tells us, is how this Sacrament is to be administered (*New Code*, 780).

Though the Scriptures make no mention of the use of Chrism by the Apostles when giving Confirmation, this does not imply that they did not use it. For, together

with the fact that the Scriptures do not contain the full revelation of Our Saviour, and still less do they pretend to give an account "of all the things whatsoever He ordered them to observe," in the last days before the Ascension, the earliest writers, as the author of the "Coel Hier" tells us that "they did use Chrism when as ministers of the Sacrament they gave Confirmation", as St. Thomas (Pt. III, Q. lxxii, A. 4.) quotes.

Confirmation, like Baptism, imprints a character on the soul, and consequently cannot be repeated, as the Council of Trent teaches. Given to perfect the faith received in Baptism, the subject of Confirmation necessarily is one who has been baptized. And though the purpose of this Sacrament is to strengthen and confirm the graces conferred in Baptism, and enable one to confess openly the doctrine of Our Saviour, it may be conferred at any time; and in the early Church was given immediately after Baptism, even to children. In every case it produces its own effects, and though children who are confirmed may never have an occasion of outwardly professing the teaching of Christ, they will enjoy in heaven the added advantages of having been made the Temple of the Holy Ghost, because of having received this Sacrament. To receive Confirmation worthily one must be in the state of grace. It is one of the Sacraments of the living, which require sanctifying grace in the person that receives them. Nor can one who is not suitably instructed in the Christian Doctrine discharge the duty consequent on the reception of this Sacrament.

The institution of Confirmation and the graces it confers show how entirely are the conditions of the supernatural life to which Christ has restored us in Baptism,

above the ways and level of men. Weak and ineffective and held down by the dead weight of a fallen nature, the things of God and of the Spirit make but small appeal to our sensibility. But once we are made in a very real sense by Confirmation living temples of the Holy Ghost, enlightened and inspired and sustained by the Spirit of God who is thus given to us, in sober truth we may say there is no ascent of virtue, no height of goodness which we may not achieve. Such transformation we see in the Apostles themselves, who were the first to receive the Holy Ghost. Nor has there been any age since their day that has not furnished many examples of men and women from all ranks and conditions who led by the Divine Spirit, have edified the Church and glorified the Saviour whose example they so faithfully copied. We should often pray to the Holy Ghost for His light and guidance. We should ask Him to help us to obey His inspirations, and to give us courage and strength to be faithful at all times to the teaching of our Saviour and to make known His virtues by the goodness of our lives.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

The Blessed Eucharist.

What is the Blessed Eucharist?

"The Blessed Eucharist is the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the appearance of bread and wine."

This is the next Sacrament to consider, and it is the

greatest of them all. And wonderful to relate, the Blessed Eucharist is a Sacrament. It is a means of grace as the other Sacraments, but it is much more. For wherever the Blessed Eucharist is, there is Our Lord, in all the reality of His wonderful nature, and in all the fullness of His relations with the world of which He is the Redeemer. For just as He is in Himself, both God and man, just as He is in His place in heaven, He is with us in the blessed Eucharist, the manner of His presence, not the reality, being different. This, of course, is a grace to the Church and to the world that could neither have been anticipated or expected—a gift above hope or thought. Even though it is true that in God's dealings with man from the first day there was excess of goodness and favour above anything that was due to humanity, there was nothing to prepare people for such a grace as this. It is not that the material-minded like those Jews to whom the Holy Communion was first spoken of (John vi), could not believe it. It is too good almost to be true. Only the divine goodness and power that know no limits could make it possible, only a faith that has its origin in the same source could believe it. It is among the greatest, if not indeed the greatest, of the mysteries of Divine love and condescension. The believing world in the early ages had at best a rare visit of Angels as ambassadors of God. In later times He dwelt with men on occasions by a similiar substitute in a cloud or a pillar of light. A little Manna did duty for Him for centuries in the Tabernacle of the Temple. Symbols animate and inanimate, nothing better, reminded the people of God during all the years of their history of His Providence

and Presence. When He came Himself later and lived the life of a man, having become man, and died for man, who could have expected more? That He would have a personal memorial, over and above His institutions for perpetuating the blessings of His life among the coming generations one could understand. But that that memorial should be Himself remaining for ever in another Form—this is the measure of His goodness and love, not what a creature would dare to think of, or hope. Yet that unhoped-for presence is the reality of the Blessed Eucharist! The faith of the Catholic Church in this matter is summed up in the Decree of the Council of Trent which says: "This holy synod teaches and openly and simply professes that after the Consecration of the bread and wine, our Lord Jesus Christ, true God and true man, is really, truly and substantially contained under the species of these sensible things" (Sess. xiii, Cap 1).

And as in the case of all the great truths of faith which enter into the substance and life of the Church and her worship, but pre-eminently in this, this has been the explicit belief of the Church from the first days onwards. And from the evening of the institution of the Blessed Sacrament, that Holy Thursday when, with much ceremony and preparation, our Lord standing up from the Paschal Feast then celebrated for the last time, and "girding Himself with a towel, and taking water from one to one of His disciples, washed their feet with His own hands and wiped them with the towel with which He was girded," there has never been a meeting of the successors of these disciples for religious purposes anywhere, in which this Blessed

Eucharist has not been in the midst of them as the great central fact to stamp their meeting with a religious sacredness and character. In synod and council and high festival where the great dignitaries of the Church assemble, as in the humble congregations of a country parish on Sunday, the centre around which the whole assembly gathers, and to which every thought and feeling turns is the blessed Eucharist. It is the source and substance of Catholic worship.

And we can see at once how beautifully fitting it is that it is so. Surely this world could not be only the same, or like the same, after our humanity had received the Consecration of the Incarnation, and this earth was blessed by contact with the feet of our Saviour. Adequate worship went up for the first time before the Throne of God when the Word Incarnate bent down in adoration before Him. For the thirty-three years of His life upon earth this went on without ceasing. Were these to be the halcyon days of divine worship in the midst of time, and were they to pass away and become only a memory never again to be repeated? Was the tremendous sacrifice which shook the earth to its centre and put out the light of the Sun when it was offered, never to be fittingly recalled, but pass down with time like an accident of yesterday that is forgotten? Will the coming years be as bare of effective worship as those that were gone; and will there be in the future nothing to stay God's anger against sinning mortals but the memory of the long past life of the Redeemer? This is the explanation of the mystery of the Blessed Eucharist, at least in part, and a light on its worth as a Sacrament and a Sacrifice.

Considering the wonderful nature of the Blessed Eucharist, as well as the high purposes It was thus designed to serve, one can readily understand that it was not ushered in upon the world without previous intimation. Indeed our Saviour's way was to make known beforehand the greater things He intended to introduce, as well as the more important events in reference to Himself that would come to pass. He predicted His own Death and Resurrection, and many details of His passion (Luke xviii). He spoke of His Church which was to be, of its fortunes and trials and the future experiences of the Apostles (John xvi). He was not silent about the Blessed Eucharist—an institution so wonderful in itself, and destined to play so full a part in the religion of the future. The miraculous feeding of some thousands early in His public life furnished the occasion of speaking of the "Bread from Heaven" which was to come, and which, so different from the Manna of the desert, would give eternal life to those who would eat It. "Your fathers did eat Manna in the desert and are dead . . . . If any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever" (John vi, 59). The Apostles whose faith did not waver when many fell away on hearing then of the Blessed Eucharist for the first time, saw the realization of this promise at the Last Supper under conditions to bind them all the more devotedly to the Person and the service of their Master. "Knowing," as St. John tells us, "that His hour was come that He should pass out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world He loved them to the end" (John xiii, 1). And disclosing a depth of feeling they had not witnessed

in Him before, He declared: "With desire I have desired to eat this Pasch with you before I suffer" (Luke xxii, 15). "And taking bread He gave thanks and brake, and gave to them saying: This is my body which is given to you. Do this for a commemoration of me" (Luke xxiii, 19). The evangelists who give us not the ceremonies surrounding the Institution of the Blessed Eucharist, but the Institution itself, give the facts in which it consisted. They tell us that our Saviour "seated at the table of the Passover with the Twelve, took bread and blessed and broke and gave to His Disciples and said, Take ye and eat, for this is My Body, and taking the Chalice He gave thanks and gave to them saying, Drink ye all of this for this is My Blood" (Matt. xxvi, 26, 27).

It is all, this wonderful scene, so like our Blessed Saviour! When we recall any of the miracles of the three years just ended we notice the same miraculous power allied to the simplest instruments and means. He opens His lips and utters a simple word, "I will, be thou made clean, and forthwith his leprosy was cleansed" (Matt. viii, 3). "Lazarus come forth," and a man already four days dead and in an advanced stage of decomposition is restored to life and health. (John xi, 43). Like the voice that spoke from the silence of eternity, and called the world that was not into being, and it came in answering obedience to the voice of the Creator, "He spoke and they were made" (Ps. cxlviii), the Saviour takes the bread of the passover into His Sacred Hands and He calls it His Body; and in obedience to His words one thing is changed into another, and under the accidents of our corporal food

lies the Sacred Body of Christ Himself. That is the Blessed Eucharist, the Great Thanksgiving.

It were waste of time to show that this has been always the faith of the Church. From the time when the faithful gathered around their first spiritual chiefs and " were persevering in the doctrine of the Apostles, and *in the communication of the breaking of bread,* and in prayers " (Acts ii) to this day, there is nothing so well established by historic evidence of all kinds. The official decrees of Synods, the writings of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, the paintings and monuments of antiquity both under the ground, in the Catacombs, and over it, even heresy itself, all are vouchers for the consistent faith of the Church in the Blessed Eucharist. And so as you see to-day, whatever there is in architecture, and sculpture, and painting, to raise up the mind above the materialism of the age, and that recalls in any way the glories of the Catholic centuries, is it not dedicated exclusively to the honour of the Blessed Eucharist—to provide becoming shrines for Its dwelling-place and Its worship ? In the busy centres of the world's trade, in the large sea-coast towns that are points of communication, in the commerce of two hemispheres, as in the populous inland cities of the Old World and the New, just as in the dreamy surroundings of a country parish, the outstanding structure is neither the Mart, nor the Exchange, nor the Bank, nor the Post Office, but the Church, that with façade and spire and arch and pillar and all the appurtenances of art, shows how the sense of the Blessed Eucharist lives on in a material money-seeking age, and will have Its peaceful sanctuary to retire to for the calm and comfort that steal out upon

the weary heart from the Sacred Presence that is veiled in the Blessed Eucharist.

And what is this Presence? The Catechism tells us it is the Body and Blood, the Soul and Divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ. To sight and touch and taste, in form and texture it is bread—all the accidents of bread are there. The senses tell us so, and they tell us truly (St. Thomas, Office of the Blessed Sacrament). But what ordinarily are associated with these accidents, viz., the substance and the nature of bread, are not there. What answers to the word "*This*" in the Form of the Sacrament, when the words of the Form are pronounced, is not bread, but the Body of the Lord. Christ said "This is My Body," and He is Truth. There is no going behind that direct and clear assertion: no one can fail to understand. Words could not make it clearer. And though the appearances are against it they count for nothing against the word of Christ. To make it more certain to us in the words of the promise of the Blessed Eucharist (John vi), He does not even once mention His Body, but with more realism He speaks of His Flesh and Blood, and repeats these words several times: "And the Bread which I will give is My Flesh" (v. 52.) "For My Flesh is meat indeed, and My Blood is drink indeed" (v. 56). "He that eateth this Bread shall live for ever" (v. 59). The word body then, in the Institution of the Blessed Eucharist is not used figuratively, but really. "This is My Body which is given for you" (Luke xxii, 19). "This is My Blood which shall be shed for many unto the remission of sin" (Matt. xxvi, 28). There is no mistaking what Body and Blood He is speaking of in these words! Nor does He now call it flesh, which has a mere restricted

meaning, but He says, " This is My Body." This is His Body such as it is, viz., living by union with His Soul, and divine by union with the Divinity of the Eternal Word. Hence in the Blessed Eucharist you have the Body of the Lord, such as It is, that is animated with His Soul, glorious and immortal, and united to the Divinity of the Second Divine Person. In other words, the Blessed Eucharist is Our Lord, such as He is, in Heaven, in His throne of glory, only that He is concealed from our senses by the accidents of bread. Just as in the days of His mortality, His Divinity was veiled from view by the vesture of His Humanity, so in the Blessed Eucharist both Humanity and Divinity are veiled from every sense by the appearances of bread.

In the change at the Consecration the accidents of bread undergo no change. The substance underlying them is totally changed into the Body of the Lord. They remain the selfsame. And as we know all things, and judge of all things by their accidents, or the impressions these make upon our senses, looking at the Blessed Eucharist, if we knew no better ; or when we perceive Its taste and texture in the Holy Communion, we should say at once that It was bread, so truly and entirely do the accidents continue what they were after the substance of bread is replaced by the Body of the Lord. And as it is the substance of the bread that changes, not the accidents, wherever the substance of bread was when the Host was consecrated, there now is the Body of Christ. Hence every part and particle that would be bread if there was no change, is now the Holy Eucharist, and to be treated with the selfsame reverence. And hence a division of the Sacred Host means no division in the Body

of Our Lord. It means rather the Body of our Lord, whole and entire in each division, just as the whole substance of bread is in the smallest particle, as in a full loaf (*Council of Trent*, Sess. xiii, Canon iii). And hence, too, is the Sacred Body of our Saviour safe from the irreverence of the profane, who would, perhaps, in their wickedness outrage It, as their action cannot reach beyond the accidents, which veil off effectually the substance underlying them from all contact whatever. And as the accidents of bread continue the selfsame around the Sacred Body of our Saviour, they are liable to the selfsame influences that they were liable to before. Any change in them then that would make them cease to be the accidents of bread defines the absence or the presence of the Body of the Lord beneath them. But how changed soever, because they once enveloped the Sacred Body of the Saviour, we owe them reverence, as we reverence the body of a man from which the soul has departed.

In all this we see how the Blessed Eucharist surpasses every Sacrament—anything that is sacred. In this we see what the Catholic Church is that holds so great a treasure; we see, too, the privileges of the Faithful, whose Churches are the Sanctuaries of our Saviour. Furnishing their parishes with a Church, they are erecting a Temple for God to dwell in their midst. "I will set My Sanctuary in the midst of them for ever, and My Tabernacle shall be with them" (Ezech. xxxvii, 26, 27). And He can say as of old, "I will be their God, and they will be My people" (Lev. xxvi). The Blessed Eucharist is the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of our Lord under the appearance of bread and wine. But it is of our Lord, who, "rising from the dead dieth now no more"

(Rom. vi,9). His Body then is living and glorified, perfect in nature, as magnificent in glory. Under the appearance of bread, then, is the perfect and glorious Body of the Lord. Under the appearance of wine, It is the self-same perfect and glorious Body. It is not His Body apart under the appearance of bread in the Host, and His Blood apart under the appearance of wine in the Chalice—our Lord is whole and entire under the appearance of bread: He is whole and entire also under the appearance of wine. But as He is under the appearance of wine only from the Consecration to the Communion of the Celebrant, we are familiar with the Blessed Eucharist as It remained with us, under the appearance of bread, as It is reserved in the Tabernacle. In this is the Blessed Eucharist as a Sacrament different from the others. Some of these consist in a passing act—the act of administration, as Baptism and Penance. Some remain in their effects as Baptism again, and Confirmation. The Blessed Eucharist alone remains in abiding form for the comfort of the faithful, and the happiness of the Church, in the Tabernacle of the Altar (*Council of Trent*, Sess. xiii, Chap. iii). Here is verified the promise, "Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world" (Matt. xxviii, 20).

The question now is how do we come into actual possession of the Blessed Eucharist? We know how it came to be the first day, by the Word, i.e. of Christ, when He changed the unleavened bread of the Passover into His Sacred Body, and the wine of the chalice into His Sacred Blood. We know, too, that wonderful though such doings were they did not exhaust the wonders of that wonderful night. For then, outstepping any-

thing that was ever done or heard of before, our Saviour gave there and then authority and power to His Apostles to repeat these same miracles in remembrance of Him. In the same breath in which He instituted the Blessed Eucharist He instituted the Priesthood, or rather He communicated His own Priesthood to His Apostles, giving them power to change bread and wine into His Body and Blood. "Do this," said He, "for a commemoration of Me" (Luke xxii, 19). It was a wonder to hear Him say, "Take ye and eat, this is My Body" (Matt. xxvi, 26), "Drink ye all of this for this is My Blood" (Matt. xxvi, 28). They had not recovered from the first surprise when a greater befell them, as they heard themselves constituted the depositaries of the selfsame power over the Body and Blood of their Divine Master. "Do this in commemoration of Me." When the Priests of the Church then exercise this wonderful power with which Christ has invested them, we have the Blessed Eucharist present with us, that is, when they celebrate the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. For the Blessed Eucharist is a Sacrifice as well as a Sacrament.

The Blessed Eucharist as a Sacrifice.

The idea of Sacrifice in its religious, i.e. in its true and original sense, is one of the oldest ideas we have. It is an offering to God of something valuable, and that in the offering is destroyed or changed to attest our reverential appreciation of Him as the Supreme Being, and the Lord of all things. That is the meaning of destroying or changing what is offered. From the days of

Adam down through all the stages of history we find sacrifice offered to God by the most religious-minded men. The first thing recorded of Noe when he set foot on dry land after the deluge was "that he built an altar unto the Lord, and taking of all cattle and fowls that were clean, offered holocaust upon the altar" (Gen. viii, 20). In the Mosaic Law provision was made for sacrifices of many kinds, and the times and occasions for sacrifice were specified. At the Death of our Saviour the great atoning Sacrifice was offered, and He would leave behind Him a memorial of this which would be as nearly as possible a reproduction of it. This is the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass of which we are now treating. On the evening of its Institution the Paschal Lamb of the Jewish sacrifice, and the sacrifice of the True Lamb of God which it pre-figured met on the same altar. There is no mistaking the mystic immolation of our Saviour, Who, in His humanity sat at table, and in answer to His own words was placed under the appearance of the bread and wine He blessed, and changed into His own Body and Blood, thus subjecting Himself to all the ways and conditions of these. And when the priest at the Altar to-day pronounces the words of Consecration, in virtue of these words the same Body and Blood of the Lord in answer to them, take the place of the bread and wine as they did on the night of the Institution; and we have on our Altars, every time the Mass is celebrated the selfsame Body and Blood of the Saviour. Anything short of this would not carry out the command of the Lord: "Do this in commemoration of Me." That is what He did at that moment. Anything short of

this would not adequately commemorate Him, or the great act which characterizes Him above all other men —the act by which He became the Redeemer of men, and with a view to which He became Man at all. The wonder of it all has nothing to say to the reality of it. It only tells what wondrous depths of condescension our Blessed Saviour has sounded, and His sense of what is due to the Divine Majesty if adequate worship would be offered to Him. Our Lord changed bread and wine, at the Last Supper, into His Body and Blood and so instituted the sacrifice of the New Law. By His authority and power and the use of the same words He used, applied to the same matter, viz., bread and wine, the Priest offers this Sacrifice as often as he celebrates Mass.

There is no real death, of course, in the Victim of the Mass. But is there no change? Is it nothing to have the glorious body of the Lord that is surrounded with legions of adoring angels and saints in Heaven in the hands of His Minister at the Altar, within the limits of the Sacred Host and Chalice, and subject to all the conditions of lifeless objects like bread and wine? Is it not the next thing to destruction, and possible only to the omnipotence and onmiscience that called substances first into being, and assigned them their natures and their ways? To subject, then, to the ways of inert and lifeless matter the Divine Body of the Saviour, that enjoys the gifts of immortality and unfading glory, and place it on our Altars as if only bread and wine, if an unexampled wonder and a work for Divine power, is to fulfil the conditions that constitute a Sacrifice. And surround the gift with what safe-

guards He pleased, what condescension and what trust to give such power to a creature over Himself! To a creature! To as many priests as there are, or were, or will be in His Church, who, when engaged at Mass pronounce the words He consecrated for the purpose over the bread and wine of the Sacrifice, and He answers every time and everywhere, humbly submitting to take the place of the bread and wine in the Host and Chalice. In the face of such realities one can but be silent and adore.

Then to represent to the full the great redeeming Sacrifice He once offered on the Cross, when His Precious Blood was poured out to the last drop, and separated from His Body, there is a separate Consecration of the wine in the chalice from the bread on the Altar. What a wonderful institution! What a precious sacrifice! How representative, and of what! If God was appeased in times past when people had nothing better to remind Him of than Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and if propitiatory sacrifices of lambs and cattle, and first fruits turned away His anger, and He had mercy, in possessing the Holy Sacrifice how much better off are we! And if He bestowed blessings when humble sacrifices were made to Him by faithful people, what may not so great a sacrifice as we have obtain from Him! Then to be present at Mass is like being present at Calvary, being spared the horror of the visible immolation. There is no telling its influence on Almighty God, in inclining Him to have mercy and to spare. Nor can we measure its effects on those who are present, with appropriate dispositions and thoughts. Many who came to Calvary with little faith went down

" striking their breasts " and declaring " indeed this man was the Son of God " (Mark xv, 39. Luke xxiii, 47). To many faithful Catholics the Sunday Mass brings equal blessings. Anyhow it is given to all the faithful to make God infinite homage, by being present at Mass, and joining with the priest in offering this Sacrifice. We can offer a sacrifice of praise, not in humble words or human thoughts but of divine worth, in the Holy Sacrifice. We can ask His favours with an influence of impetration that is agreeably effective, and we can make an atonement for our sins, by means of this propitiatory Sacrifice, that will ever be acceptable.

Surely it was the father of lies, and the avowed enemy of God and man, that deprived a Christian people of the blessings of this august sacrifice. And what substance and reality in the worship that centres round this sacrifice! It is no longer the feeble elements of this world—living things how valuable soever, or precious gifts of nature, or the vows of men, or the heroic aspirations of devout and palpitating hearts—these if you will, but not these alone. They are at best but the setting of men's devotion around this great sacrifice to which the mind of God is ever attentive, the Sacrifice that, renewing the Sacrifice of Calvary, conciliates His favour, and brings down His blessings. To go to Mass is the first ambition of the Catholic child. It is an instinct of Faith. To have to stay away is the last and most bitter sacrifice the heart, worn out with the years of life's experience, can resign itself to.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Holy Communion.

Nor have we yet exhausted the wonders of the Blessed Eucharist. It is much to have so great a Sacrifice, wherewith to honour and to worship God. It is much to have our Saviour's abiding presence when Mass is over. It is more still that it is given, not to the Priest alone to eat of the Sacrifice, but to the ordinary faithful to approach the Altar and receive there, as the Apostles received it, the Body of the Lord, contained beneath the sacramental veils. This is surely to reach the limit of an all-embracing and indiscriminating charity of God towards men. In the old law it was the privilege of the Priesthood to partake with the Altar. It was a crime for a Jew to touch the things of the sanctuary. The Loaves of Proposition that were set before the Lord every Sabbath were eaten only by the Priests. "And they shall be Aaron's and his sons' that they may eat them in the Holy Place" (Lev. xxiv, 9). It was outstepping every precedent, and breaking down all bounds of privilege when the Living Bread from Heaven of our Sacrifice was made the food of all the faithful. This is the Blessed Eucharist as a Sacrament. Nor is it so much that the Holy Communion is not the privilege of a class, and that all are equally at liberty to receive it. It is made a matter of urgency, pressing on everyone under the severest penalties, to approach the Holy Table. "Except you eat the Flesh of the Son of Man and drink His Blood You shall not have life in you" (John vi, 54.). These

are the words of our Saviour speaking to the multitude, and they need no comment. Not alone is everyone free to receive, but no one is free to abstain.

"Who hath known the mind of the Lord, and who hath been His counsellor?" (Rom. xi, 34). Who can explain or give the reasons for this? All we know is, that according to the teaching of the Church on the significance of the Sacraments it is clear that instituting the Blessed Eucharist under the appearance of bread, and obliging all to receive It, Our Lord would teach us that the spiritual life that we receive in Baptism, and is strengthened in Confirmation, is supported and grows to maturity in this divine Sacrament. What bread is to our corporal life the Blessed Eucharist is to our spiritual life. What the worth of the life that is fed upon this divine Food! What influences play upon the soul brought into such intimate communication with our Lord Himself! The garments with which His Sacred Body was clothed in His lifetime were made sacred by contact with Him, and had a healing influence. "They besought Him that they might touch but the hem of His garment, and as many as touched were made whole" (Matt. xiv, 36). What healing virtue flows out every time over heart and soul and mind of the devout receiver! We are dealing not with the things of nature, but what is above nature; we are treating of God Our Saviour immediately present with the one thing in creation that is like Himself, the reflection of Himself, and purchased back again to Himself at a great price, viz., the human soul in its earthly tenement. What must not one Holy Communion devoutly received mean to it! In such a

matter we cannot go nearer than a general statement will carry us. But it is true to say that every time one approaches the Holy Table he receives what helps of grace he can bear away with him. It is we, not Our Saviour who define the measure of His gifts. Just as you cannot help a man to walk faster than his pace, or to do anything beyond his capacity to receive your help, so it is also in the distribution of God's graces, even in the Holy Communion! Nor is this a matter of analogy. It is a well-known fact that God adjusts His influences on men to their capacity and powers. He is eloquent in Isaias, simple in Amos. But as a master hand engaged on poor materials will bring out astonishing effects, so it is with the Holy Communion, even on the coldest heart! The effect and purpose of this sacrament is to form Christ in the heart and mind and dispositions of His children. "He that eateth Me the same also shall live by Me" (John vi, 58). St. Augustine, speaking for our Lord, says: "I will not be changed into you, but you will be changed into Me." He is the model on which we have to be moulded. The Gospel traces out the lines of this formation. But to live the Gospel in fact, to translate it into actual life means a levelling up, and a toning up of such a nature as ours—of such a nature as we find it in ourselves. Coming to us in the Holy Communion our Lord would be Himself the corrective of what is faulty in us. He would be the source of the strength and growth of the life that, beginning in Baptism, is Christian in its character and in its aims. Against the forces of evil both within us and without that are a menace to that life, left to our-

selves, and such other helps as we have, we could do but little. For the generality of Christians, to live up to the standard of the Gospel would be a vain ambition. But in the Sacrament of the Holy Communion, Which is bread from Heaven indeed, we have everything, and everything in abundance, to transform us from within, and make us grow with a sound and healthy growth, in all the ways of a Christian life. And as the health and vigour, which food maintains in the body are the source of the activities of our manhood, and an immunity fron disease of various forms, so the virtues of a Christian life flourish, and are manifest in those who frequent the Holy Table, while vice grows faint, and temptation innocuous.

Not without special preparation would one venture to approach the Holy Table. The sense of the Real Presence of our Blessed Saviour, and the thought of receiving Him in Holy Communion will ever secure so much. His own example in preparing the Apostles for their First Communion, by humble and instructive service, tells us how free of stain one must be to approach the Blessed Sacrament. The Church requires absolution of grievous sin as an indispensable preparation, as if the best contrition of our own could not sufficiently prepare the soul for the coming of Our Saviour. (*Council of Trent*, Sess. XIII, chap. vii). "No one conscious of mortal sin, how contrite soever, shall approach the holy Communion without previous sacramental confession." The practice of the faithful is to go to confession if possible when conscious of venial sin. "He that is washed needeth not but to wash his feet, but is clean wholly" (John xiii, 10),

said our Saviour to St. Peter. Given the state of grace and the sense of our unworthiness, and trustful confidence in the Paternal Love of Him Whom we are anxious to receive, and we have enough for a fruitful reception of Holy Communion. This may not satisfy the requirements of fervent piety. It may be much for one who lives amid the distractions and entanglements of many cares. Pope Pius X in any case has settled the question for us; and exhorting all the faithful to go to Holy Communion often, puts a sufficient preparation no higher than freedom from grievous sin, and an honest wish to advance in virtue (*Congr. of the Council*, Dec. 1905). The Blessed Eucharist, sacred above all appreciation though it is, is the food of our spiritual life. And just as nothing is more necessary for the daily bread on which life and strength depend, than normal, healthy and a natural wish to eat, so for a healthy spiritual life, nurtured on this Bread from Heaven, nothing more is necessary than the normal health which comes of Sanctifying Grace, and an honest wish to grow in the love and service of God. But while such a standard is sufficient for a fruitful reception of the Blessed Sacrament, the vivid faith that tells us that in these accidents that we see and taste, you have no mere dead materials, touched in a passing way by the breath of the Holy Spirit, to convey grace to us, as in the other Sacraments, but that Our Saviour Himself is there in all His Heavenly glory, will not be satisfied with so much, or rather so little as this. It is the Real Presence that makes the Blessed Eucharist different from anything else that is sacred, and when realized at all it must

be met with a living faith, and humble sentiments of our unworthiness, and some struggling accents of our responding love. Everything about this Sacrament is on a scale peculiar to Itself. It is not alone a sign and source of grace—It is the Author of grace Himself. It may be received, not once in a lifetime, as other Sacraments, but often—even daily. No elaborate preparations are required as necessary conditions for receiving, but to genuine faith and enlightened piety, all this will but stimulate devotion and bring out fitting sentiments in every Catholic heart that can be touched by such wonders of the Saviour's love.

The Church, interpreting our Saviour's mind as to the reception of Holy Communion, obliges all the faithful to receive at Easter time in their own parish, The Easter duty is thus rather a law of discipline, and to observe it a sign of our communion with the faithful in an outward profession of the Faith in its most characteristic practice. It can hardly be regarded as a use of the Holy Communion, as the food on which the life of the soul is strengthened and maintained. For this the frequent use of Holy Communion is necessary. How frequently one must receive it is not defined beyond the express desire of our Holy Father that we should receive even every day if possible (Decree, Dec. 1905). To encourage this practice he declared explicitly how little is required by way of preparation. On the other hand, to approach the Altar only at rare intervals is not to shun a practice, which in truth is pious, but to mistake the purpose Holy Communion is designed to serve.

As a tribute of respect to the Blessed Sacrament

we must receive fasting, and with every becoming evidence of the deep devotion due to all that is most sacred. When sickness renders this impossible, as we can well imagine, fasting is not obligatory, and the late Pope Pius extended this privilege to the case of tedious and incapacitating illness. Children of tender years, when just capable of understanding what the Blessed Sacrament is, are to be admitted, suitably prepared, for their First Communion, and like grown up people are to be sent forward often to the Altar. By such enactments would the Pope impress the Faithful with a sense of the frequency which they should aim at in receiving Holy Communion.

We receive at Mass at the time prescribed in the Liturgy, nor can the time of Mass be better employed than in acts of immediate preparation. Contrition for past sins and ingratitude—acknowledgement of our actual unworthiness, and petitions for future fidelity, with the thought of the goodness that pays us a personal visit, will answer for the dispositions appropriate to such an occasion. We receive kneeling, but with no other external demonstration of any sort beyond the composed demeanour of one vividly conscious of the sacredness of the moment. Acts of adoration of the Lord actually present when we have received, followed by acts of thanksgiving, and petitions for all kinds of favours, will occupy a quarter of an hour at least. Nor should one readily allow the thought of so blessed an experience to pass away from the mind afterwards.

Considered, as we have now considered, the Blessed Eucharist is a Sacrament for all the faithful to receive.

As a Sacrifice of our public worship in the Mass, and as the mode of our Saviour's abiding presence with the Church throughout the world, we recognize what a fount of richest blessings we have in It, and what sustaining help on the road to eternity. With touching piety It has to be received at approaching death. (*New Code*, Can. 864). Then It is fittingly called the Viaticum. For as it was the food of our pilgrimage through life, It is the staff of our support when entering upon the Promised Land.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

The Sacrament of Penance.

What is Penance? Penance is a Sacrament by which the sins committed after Baptism are forgiven.

By Baptism we are made members of the Church, and the agencies of grace within the Church are made available to us. One of these is the Sacrament of Penance (*Council of Trent*, Sess. vi, Cap. 14). In the order of the Sacraments, Penance comes after the Blessed Eucharist, though in practice it is made use of as a preparation for receiving the Blessed Eucharist. It is so placed, because as we have seen, the spiritual life, to which the Sacraments minister, begins in Baptism, is strengthened in Confirmation, and grows to full development by means of the Blessed Eucharist. If, however, it should be lost, as it well might be indeed, and as experience shows, happens

but too often, there is another Sacrament, the special purpose and effect of which is to restore the spiritual life anew, and set us on our way again in the grace and service of God. This is the work and purpose of the Sacrament of Penance (*Council of Trent*, Sess. vi, Cap. 14). All that we have seen when treating of the life of our Blessed Saviour, and the Institutions set up by Him, is evidence of the care He felt for men's spiritual welfare, and how marvellously He provided for our many requirements and needs. It surpasses everything we have yet considered, that when all was brought to naught again in individual instances by men lapsing into sin, that He instituted a special sacrament for the express purpose of restoring them to His grace and favour. This is the great proof of His unfailing mercy, and His willingness to forgive, that He set up in His Church the agency of forgiveness. And it comes as an added source of comfort and encouragement, that no sin, how great soever, or attended with no matter what aggravating circumstances, given genuine dispositions of repentance, that may not be blotted out by the grace of this Sacrament. As all the sins of men were included in His atonement, Penance, by which the grace of that atonement is applied to the sinner, is easily equal to the washing away of every most grievous sin. The Church has never had a doubt as to her faculties in this respect through this sacrament—has never refused forgiveness on the ground of want of power—has condemned in fact as heretics those who questioned her power in this respect (Novations, A.D. 250). And the unlimited terms of her commission "Whose sins

you shall forgive they are forgiven them". "Whatsoever you shall loose upon earth shall be loosed in Heaven" (John xx, 23; Matt. xviii, 18), justifies her view. It is to be noticed too, that the sins for which penance was instituted are precisely grievous sins—the sins that kill the soul, and rob us of sanctifying grace, that turn God's face away from us in displeasure, and by which we turn away from Him, turning in preference, of our own deliberate choice, to some forbidden object. To smooth our way back again to favour and forgiveness, our Saviour instituted this Sacrament.

And just as He assigned no limit to its efficiency for blotting out our sins, He placed no bounds to the frequency with which we may avail of it. "I say not to thee till seven times: but till seventy times seven times," was the exuberant reply of our Saviour to Peter, inquiring how often he was to forgive an offending brother (Matt. xviii, 22). And the Council of Trent (Sess. xiv. Cap. 5), dealing with this question teaches us "Penitents may be forgiven their sins as often as they approach this Sacrament" (Sess. xiv, Cap. 2).

If men were consulted as to the form this Sacrament of Penance should take, doubtless it would be multiform. Once we know the form selected by the Divine Wisdom of Our Blessed Saviour we can see its propriety and fitness for its purpose. The first condition for the forgiveness of a wrong is to acknowledge it. As no one can in justice be punished for a crime unless found guilty, no one can be pardoned for a crime who does not acknowledge it. And to acknowledge it is to be spared half the punishment due to it. This holds among men. It is the same with God. The

first condition for pardon exacted from our First Parents was the acknowledgement of their guilt. Even though they pleaded what excuse they had, they had to own to breaking the Commandment. Down through all the Scriptural years, when a Patriarch or Prophet pleaded for his people he began his prayer with the confession of their sins. From Abraham to Moses, from Job to the Machabees this is ever recurring. When our Saviour then would hand over to His substitutes the divine prerogative of granting pardon for sins it is no surprise that He based forgiveness on Confession as an indispensable condition. And this becomes the more clear when we consider the manner He prescribed for the exercises of forgiveness. It was not by praying for the sinner, nor by the exercise of any priestly function properly so called, such as offering sacrifice for sin, as was the custom of the Old Law, (Leviticus xvi), but by a judicial act. And he gave power not alone to forgive, but to refuse forgiveness: "Whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain they are retained' (John xx, 23). Now a discriminating judgment in this way in the exercise of power, demands a knowledge of the crime, and a balancing of the consideration bearing upon it. To obtain forgiveness of sin, therefore, from the Minister of God there must be a full and sincere confession. And this has been the practice of the Church from the first day. If anything indeed, in later times there has been a mitigation of the practice since public penance, a sort of open confession of grave crime, was made to give place to a more frequent use of the Sacrament of Penance. The Council

of Trent (Sess. xiv), settled the matter definitely, both as to the practice of the Church and the grounds on which that practice is based, when it pronounced anathema "on anyone who should deny that Sacramental Confession was instituted by divine law, and by that law is necessary for salvation, or who should say that the practice of secret confession to the Priest alone, which was always observed in the Church, and is now observed, is foreign to the institution or command of Christ, and is simply an invention of men" (Can. vi). This is the last word on Confession, and the source from which it originated, and the place it holds as a means of sanctification and salvation. Coming to greater detail, in another Canon of the same session, it says anathema to anyone "who should say that for the remission of sins in the Sacrament of Penance it is not made necessary by the divine law to confess all and every mortal sin that one remembers after a careful and diligent self-examination" (Can. vii). Many years before that, the Fourth Council of the Lateran, when enacting the law of annual Confession, obliged "all the faithful who had reached the years of discretion, to confess each by themselves, all their sins." And surely the priest cannot forgive before he knows what to forgive, nor can he decide whether forgiveness is to be denied, until the case is fully laid before Him. "No one can judge of sins of which he is ignorant; it is necessary, therefore, to confess them," says St. Thomas (*Contra Gentes*, 72). Hence, whether a certain kind of grievous sin is committed many times, or one has fallen into many different sins, the confession of all of them in either case is equally urgent, since the guilt of grievous

sin is in every one of them. This is all laid down in Can. 901, New Code, the latest official declaration of the Church in this matter, which says: "Whoever after Baptism has committed mortal sins which have not been directly remitted by the keys of the Church, must confess all of them of which after a careful examination of conscience he has knowledge, and explain in his confession any circumstances that change the species of his sins." To this law of the integrity of confession in normal circumstances there is no exception. No personal consideration, certainly, of fear, or shame, or any inherent difficulty attaching to Confession, will excuse from sacrilege and the frustration of the Sacrament a sinner who consciously withholds a mortal sin not previously confessed and remitted. Whatever, on the other hand unconsciously escapes a careful self-examination, or is forgotten in Confession, while no prejudice to the validity of the Sacrament, is to be noted and declared in the next Confession. Circumstances extrinsic to the Sacrament, as the condition of the penitent near death, a deaf person confessing in the presence of others and incapable of removal, or any other circumstances affecting the person who wants confession that make a full confession practically impossible, exempts the penitent for the time from the obligation of confessing all his sins. The will for the deed will satisfy in such cases, as happened so often during the late war in the case of soldiers going into an engagement.

The Confession necessary for forgiveness must not be alone complete but sorrowful. It is scarcely necessary to emphasize this quality of Confession, as a bald recital of one's sins that proceeds not from a

penitent heart is not the Confession that will avail with God to ratify the pardon of the priest. Sin is a turning away of the heart from God to something of our own choice, against His will. To regain His favour we must retrace our steps in regret and sorrow, and Confession is the natural expression of the repentant mind. We confess our sins because we are sorry for them. It is the language of contrition. And God has but availed of an instinct of nature, and raised it to a higher purpose when He made Confession an element in the process of forgiveness in the Sacrament of Penance. But He has done much more. As the Council of Trent declares, and as we have just explained: "Contrition was ever necessary to obtain pardon from God" (Sess. xiv, 11). And when the heart is touched with sorrow at the thought of God offended, and one regrets his sins for His sake who is so good, such sorrow reaches the throne of mercy, and brings down the answering grace that sanctifies the soul again, blots out the sins, and restores the broken friendship. Such Contrition, of course, implies the intention of doing whatever is necessary to regain God's friendship, and therefore of confessing as occasion offers. But when Contrition takes a lower form, and one regrets his sins because of the evils they entail, or the evils that an enlightened conscience sees in sin itself; and above all, when the better instincts of the soul are blunted or blurred by habits of sins, and one is only capable of a feeble selfish sorrow, such Contrition is an ineffectual agency of grace, and leaves one cold and lifeless. Now this is the deeper depth of mercy sounded by our Saviour through this Sacrament of

Penance. That Contrition which possibly is much more common than the higher and perfect kind is made sufficient with the added aids of the Sacrament of Penance, to secure God's grace, and reinstate us again in the favour and friendship we had lost. A soul, enfeebled by passion, or distracted by the world's aims and cares, and in any case little sensitive to the higher gifts of grace—the loss of God's friendship, and the wickedness of sin—is little capable of rising to the level of a detached, unselfish sorrow that would claim God's favour, and be rewarded with His grace. To such as these our Saviour has come down, and availing of their sincere, if mixed and ineffectual contrition, confers in the Sacrament of Penance the grace that sanctifies them and washes away their sins. "Though without the Sacrament of Penance, Imperfect Contrition cannot lead the sinner to justification, it disposes him for God's grace in the Sacrament" (*Council of Trent*, Sess. xiv, Cap. 4). How many are gathered within the wide range of these conditions that otherwise would have lived strangers to God's grace and friendship! This contrition we speak of now, while ineffectual for forgiveness by itself, is sufficient as a disposition for the grace of the Sacrament. It is genuine sorrow, no matter what has prompted it, and it embraces all one's sins. It is supernatural, too, because the outcome of a view of sin that comes from Faith and the divine teaching, nor is it produced without the help of actual grace. If one has sorrow for his sins, then, because he fears God's displeasure, or has forfeited His favour, or because of his clearer insight into sin, the thought of God is an element in His sorrow, to be an outcast from Him

is looked on as an evil, and what causes it is regretted, and God will not spurn such a one from Himself, nay, will rather help him back to His Friendship. Now, this is exactly what takes place in the Sacrament of Penance. The sincere and humble accusation of himself, sorrow breathing through it, and the sacrifice of self-esteem, this manifestation of his inmost self implies—conclusive evidence of a humble and contrite heart, which God will not despise (Ps. l),—entitle the penitent to the benefit of absolution. Our Lord did not rate it higher, the Church can ask no more (*Council of Trent*, Sess. xiv). The purpose of amendment, of course, is implied in any sorrow for the sin worth the name, nor will one who is genuinely concerned about the past fail to take precautions for the future.

Now, what remains is to repair the injury done to God by sin—the dishonour of offending Him, the affront of the offence. But as true repentance implies a spirit of reparation, one will gladly do penance who is sorry for offending God. The cry of the first Christian converts "What shall we do, men and brethren?" and the reply of Peter "Do penance, everyone of you" (Acts ii, 38), are ever repeated when a sinner is pardoned by the minister of Christ. Nor is there anything more noticeable in the practice of penitents than their care to receive a penance before leaving the confessional. Such penance indeed was at one time the most noticeable feature of repentance.

Confession, Contrition, and Satisfaction, which we have so far traced as essential elements in the process of forgiveness, are declared by the Church as the matter

of this sacrament. "If anyone should deny that for the full and perfect remission of sins that the three acts of the penitent are required as *quasi materia* of the Sacrament of Penance, viz., Confession, Contrition, and Satisfaction, which are called the three parts of Penance, let him be anathema" (*Council of Trent*, Sess. xiv, 4). The "Form" of the Sacrament by which grace is actually conferred are the words of absolution pronounced by the priest, when the penitent has sorrowfully confessed, and willingly accepts what penance the Priest enjoins. The words of absolution pronounced over Him by the Confessor convey grace to his soul that cleanses it from his sins. It matters nothing how many or how few, how great or how serious the sins confessed may be, given Contrition even in its less perfect form, and under these words of the Priest "I absolve thee from thy sins," those sins yield place in the soul of the sinner to sanctifying grace, and he rises up from death to life, clothed with the "first robe" of the returning prodigal. Here is that parable realized every day in fact, and the power conveyed by that generous concession "Whatsoever you shall loose upon earth shall be loosed also in Heaven", and by that other "Whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven them", is exercised to effect indeed.

In the terms under which the power of forgiving sin was conferred no distinction was made of the sins for which absolution may be given. Hence, while mortal sins must be confessed, as the Church has ever held and practised, venial sins may be made a matter of Sacramental Confession also (*Council of Trent*,

Sess. xiv, 5). And not these alone, but sins once confessed in the absence of more necessary matter, or for other useful reasons, may be submitted again, and absolution again received. Just as the Prophet in the bitterness of his soul recounted all his years (Isaias xxxviii), and Peter shed the tears of many years over his lapses in the passion, and received every time the grace of forgiveness, so may we confess again our past sins, and receive each time the grace of absolution (*New Code*, Can. 902). A sin remitted is ever a sin committed, and as a sin remitted by Contrition has yet to be confessed for absolution, so may we confess again, and repeatedly, our already forgiven sins. Not indeed that it is ever necessary to repeat, even in a General Confession except at will, a sin once properly confessed and pardoned; but that a sin even venial, once committed, is sufficient matter for absolution ever afterwards. It need hardly be insisted that a sinful act that is a grievous violation of more than one Commandment, as to strike one's father, to steal Church property, must be confessed in these qualifying details, as such aggravating circumstances are really separate sins. And while the divine law enforces the Confession of every mortal sin, if stolen property, e.g., is sacred it must be confessed as such. (*Council of Trent*, Sess. xiv, 5). Whatever on the other hand falls short of mortal sin, whether an attendant circumstance or a separate act, while usefully confessed is not of obligation.

The power of forgiving sins in the ordered manner of the Sacrament of Penance is a faculty of the Priesthood. The Priest alone in the Church has ever exer-

cised this power. No one else indeed has at any time made pretence of possessing it. "If anyone should say that priests are not the only ministers of absolution let him be anathema" (*Council of Trent*, Sess. xiv, Can. 10). "The priest only is the minister of this Sacrament" (*New Code*, Can 872). To the Apostles, the first priests and their successors, our Lord entrusted this power. But for the special manner of its exercise—as a judicial act something more is necessary. The Priest must have jurisdiction over the penitent (*New Code*, Can. 872). Just as a judge cannot try a case outside his territory, neither can a priest absolve a penitent who is not his subject in this matter. A priest in his parish, a Bishop in his diocese, and the Pope over all the Church are the regularly qualified ministers of the Sacrament of Penance for the faithful of their charge. From these, priests receive authority to hear Confessions in their respective spheres. The grant of jurisdiction to a Confessor by a Bishop usually extends to all the ordinary faithful of his diocese, and includes all the sins ordinarily committed. A few of the graver crimes, which indeed are of rare occurrence, the Bishop as a rule, reserves to himself or to His vicars. Some of the more heinous, the Pope reserves to himself, wherever committed over the whole Church. In the one case of danger of death every priest has full power to absolve any person from all his sins. The Church gives this unlimited authority to every priest in these urgent circumstances, and in these only (*New Code*, Can. 882). It need hardly be stated that a confidence so intimate and a self-conquest so complete as Confession implies, entail an

obligation on the Confessor of absolute and inviolable secrecy. Only the penitent himself, or He who obliged the sinner to confess his sins for the pardon of them, can release the Confessor from the trust confided in him. Hence, for no conceivable purpose is he at liberty to betray his penitent. St. John Nepomucene is enrolled among the martyrs because he paid the sacrifice of his life rather than reveal the confession of a penitent. " The seal of Confession is inviolable, says the *New Code* (Can. 889), and the obligation of it extends to everyone who in any way may have heard a confession as well as the Confessor.

" Who understands sins " says the Psalmist. Though the Church gives much enlightenment on this dark and difficult subject, much remains obscure and hidden away from every eye. In every sin there is the personal element qualifying the guilt, and there is the stress of circumstances to lighten or mitigate the blame. When the grace of absolution falls upon the sorrow-stricken soul does it restore again the innocence that preceded the first grievous fall, and are there no consequences to be considered ? When wounds came thick and fast that would be fatal every time, as in habitual sin, are no deep impressions left, and is no further toll due to God so frequently offended, yet so easily appeased ? Is the warning of the Prophet, " Not to be without fear for sins forgiven " (Eccl. v), superfluous in the Church where sacramental absolution washes away every stain ? Such has never been the teaching or the practice from the beginning. In the early ages long and severe penance, often running into years, was assigned to the penitent after his con-

fession. The public discipline of the time took account of the more grievous sins, and fixed by Statute, or the Canons, as they were called, the penance to be performed after such sins were confessed. The underlying principle all the while is that the necessity of doing penance is not removed by absolution. The Confessor in every case assigns a penance, which, having a sacramental efficacy, is far more effective as satisfaction than a penance voluntarily undertaken. But after such penance much ordinarily remains, as it remained in the first ages, to be compensated for by the prayers and penitential efforts of the penitent himself. Deep and sincere contrition can do much to meet the demands of Divine Justice. "Many sins are forgiven her because she loved much" (Luke vii, 47), said our Lord of Mary Magdalen. The value, indeed, of all sorts of penance depends more on the penitential spirit from which they come than on the burden or inconvenience they impose. "Rend your hearts and not your garments" (Joel ii, 13), may be said to the penitent as to the impenitent sinner. And in her Liturgy the Church addresses to the penitent and impenitent alike these words of the Prophet. Her teaching and practice suggests the inevitableness of punishment for forgiven sin (*Council of Trent*, Sess. vi, Can. 12), unless averted by voluntary penance or by Indulgences.

Voluntary penance, a sure sign of a contrite heart, is ever effective in atoning for our sins. It is our Lord's own institution (Luke xiii, 5). "Unless you do penance you shall all likewise perish"; not, however, that ordinary Christians need seek outside the toil,

and trials and sufferings of life, if accepted in a spirit of penance, wherewith to make atonement for sins whose guilt is already pardoned. The sufferings of his cross patiently accepted as a just retribution for his sins opened the gates of Paradise for the "Good Thief" on the day of his death. Nor is less virtue in the labour and cares and trials of an ordinary Christian life when accepted in a like penitential spirit. The Church, not less solicitous for the soul of the labourer, of the sick, and of the infirm than of others, exempts them from the penance and fastings she puts upon the leisured rich in penitential seasons. Given then the grace of God, and such suffering lives if but borne with patience, they are themselves habitual sacrifices for forgiven sins. Alms to the poor are acceptable reparation, and prayers of forgiveness, like the prayers of David, are acceptable and effective as satisfaction and penance. Besides these, and such as these, there is yet the way of indulgence to escape the punishment due for sin (*Council of Trent*, Sess. xiv, 9).

What is an Indulgence? An Indulgence is pardon granted by the Church, of a debt of punishment yet due to God on account of sins, the guilt of which has been remitted. So far does the power of binding and loosing granted to the Church extend. So true that God rejoices, not in the sufferings of his children, that the Church may release the penitent sinner from his outstanding obligations to the Divine Justice by the easy expedient of Indulgences.

The first instance of the exercise of this power is attributed to St. Paul in the case of the incestuous Corinthian. At the prayers of the Martyrs, and in view

of their merits, the Bishops, as we learn from St. Cyprian (A.D. 250), granted indulgences to penitents. And the Council of Nice (A.D. 325) exhorts the Bishops to be indulgent to persons undergoing severe penance. In the early ages the Church used the power of granting Indulgences very sparingly. Probably Urban II, at the time of the First Crusade, was the First Pope who granted a Plenary Indulgence, A.D. 1097. But whether or not, the power to grant Indulgences was known to reside in the Church at all times, and has been exercised at all times to the relief of the faithful. Hence, when the Council of Trent laid down this doctrine, and claimed for the Church the right to grant Indulgences, she but announced what was known and acted on at all times.

As is well known, there are two kinds of Indulgences, Plenary and Partial. But of whatever kind, the remission of punishment which is effected by an Indulgence is in every case dependent on the performance of some specified spiritual work to which the Indulgence is attached. A Partial Indulgence is a remission of a part only, of the debt of punishment which the penitent yet owes to God. Partial Indulgences are attached generally to prayers and aspirations which are much recommended to the Faithful. The "Works of Mercy," too, are indulgenced in the same way, and in recent years, in answer to the petitions addressed to them, the Popes have added Indulgences to almost all the pious practices and prayers that are in use among the Faithful. How much punishment is condoned by gaining a Partial Indulgence we have no means of knowing. What we do know is this, that the measure of the Indulgence is the Measure of the Canonical

Penance imposed in the early times, and whatever was the efficacy of this in releasing the penitent from punishment, the same is the efficacy of the Partial Indulgence granted by the Church to-day. An Indulgence, e.g., of 100 days attached to the pious recital of a prayer is equivalent in effect to 100 days penance in the early Church; and so correspondingly in every case.

A Plenary Indulgence means full pardon of all the punishment one owes to God for all the sins of His life. So great a grace is attached only to some considerable religious exercise, as, e.g. attending a Retreat, reciting the Rosary regularly for a specified time, or some notable religious exercise of a like nature. To gain a Plenary Indulgence it is always a condition moreover to approach the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Communion, and on the day of Holy Communion to pray in the Church for the intentions of the Holy Father. Much stress is laid, on the wording of the grant of a Plenary Indulgence, on the dispositions requisite to entitle one to so great a favour. As this Indulgence means full pardon for all punishment for past sins, it supposes full detachment of the mind and heart from all sin, and an earnest wish to serve God faithfully in the future. So great a grace could hardly be expected on less generous terms.

At first sight to grant a pardon to a repentant sinner for punishment which God did not forgive when He forgave the sins that were the occasion of it, would seem trenching on a province that He had made His own. The Church, however, has never had a doubt of her right to enter even here, and on her own terms to release

the penitent from some or all of the punishment still due to God. In the wide sweep of the grant of power to bind and loose at will with which she has been endowed, she felt she is within her right not alone to forgive the sins of men, but the punishment consequent on them also, on suitable conditions. And this all the more because she can substitute for the satisfaction of the penitent what is far more acceptable to God than anything he can either do or suffer to make atonement for his sins. In her hands is the unbounded treasure of the superabundant satisfactions of our Blessed Saviour, of the Blessed Virgin, and the Saints. And as the riches of every family are available for all its members, those satisfactions of our Blessed Saviour and the Saints are available for application by the Church to the wants of their more needy brethren. In granting Indulgences the Church but avails of those satisfactions, which, being beyond the needs of those who made them, have gone into her treasury, and she applies them now in liquidation of the debts of those others of her members who owe much yet to God. Thus Indulgences which are granted only for some pious motive, and can be gained only on the performance of some pious or religious exercise, complete the work of the Sacrament of Penance. By both combined we gain pardon for our sins, and of the punishment we deserve for them.

The spirit of the Church at the present day is, and for long has been, in the direction of the frequent use of the Sacrament of Penance. In the early ages more stress was laid on the penitential works of the sinner for a reformation of life, and satisfaction for sins confessed. But whether a growing aversion or distaste

for penitential practices, or an increased realization of the more efficacious virtue of a Sacrament purposely instituted for the forgiveness of grievous actual sin, or both be the explanation, one hears more of frequent Confession, and sees more of it to-day than of lengthened penitential practices. At any rate if we are slow to do penance, and endeavour to avoid it, we should try the healing virtue of a Sacrament that may be received again and again for the more effectual remission even of sins already confessed and pardoned. Nor should we forget the lowered condition brought on by the commission of actual sin, and the tendency to repetition which the habit of sinning induces. The frequent use of the healing grace of this Sacrament will counteract and obviate these. Together with all this, in the Sacrament of Penance we have the advantage of the advice and guidance of the Confessor. In answer to our confidence, which should be unreserved as it is intimate, there is in him the responsive sympathy of a man who holds the place of the father of the returning prodigal. His knowledge and experience and wise judgment, aided too as he is by the Holy Spirit Whose place he holds, are at our service. Such advice and guidance are oftentimes rare visitations of grace; at all times are among the great advantages of the Sacrament of Penance.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Extreme Unction.

What is Extreme Unction? Extreme Unction is a Sacrament which gives us grace to die well, and is instituted chiefly for the spiritual strength and comfort of dying persons.

As we remarked already, when treating of the Sacraments generally, so well has our Blessed Saviour taken account of our needs, and so clearly has he recognized where help was most required that He instituted a Sacrament not for our ordinary recurring wants alone, but for each of the great crises or turning points in human life. Hence there is a sacrament for the time of our birth or the beginning of our independent and separate existence, for the time afterwards when one begins to take his place among his fellow men, and to receive in himself the influence of intercourse with them. Marriage is a Sacrament; so is Priestly ordination, and then at last when the end is closing in and this life for good and all is about to terminate for anyone, and one has to enter into another life and world, there is another Sacrament, another fount of grace appropriate to that occasion to fit us for the great ordeal, and to enable us to go through successfully and well. This is the Sacrament of Extreme Unction.

The name given to this Sacrament is indicative of its nature and effects. It is given by anointing—anointing the organs of sense with holy oil specially consecrated for the purpose, and anointing now for the last time. The place after Penance assigned

to Extreme Unction—a Sacrament administered only when the end is considered near—is due to the fact that it completes the work of the Sacrament of Penance. Just as Confirmation perfects the work of Baptism, so does Extreme Unction complete what has been done in us by Penance. Penance frees the soul from sin. But there are effects of sin which Penance does not remove. Besides the tendency to evil and the impress of habit contracted by repeated sinful acts, there is, a spiritual inability—a weakness caused by sin, which Penance does not heal or heal effectually (St. Thomas, Suppl. Q. xxx, A. 1). It is not designed to do it. It has its own special work to do and it does it well. It is not its province to take account of the enfeebled condition of the soul which was not alone overshadowed, but in its substance vitiated by the presence of sin, when that sin was washed away. Doubtless as physical disease imcapacitates one for physical exercise, and when removed by treatment leaves the body weak, slow in action, and incapable of any but gentle exercise, according to the gravity of the illness, so we may assume is the effect of sin on the soul in its cognate functions and appropriate acts. One of the effects of the Fall in Adam was, that nature was not alone inclined to evil but was not inclined to good. A dullness, an insensibility to good came after the fall, which we may regard as one of the worst consequences of sin, and the disablement this implies is but increased by our own actual sins afterwards. Now it is this lowered condition, the effects of actual sin, the Sacrament of Extreme Unction is designed to remedy.

And it is instructive to notice that this Sacrament

is not for any special class. It is a Sacrament to be received by all the Faithful. It is intended for all the dying, and its purpose is the same for all, viz., to remove the weakness, not physical or corporal, but the spiritual weakness left behind by sin. As a sign of its strengthening and elevating effects upon the soul it alleviates indeed the corporal debility ; and contributes in many cases to the actual recovery of the patient. And this may be, and is an intended purpose of the Sacrament. But the chief end and purpose of this as of all the Sacraments is not physical but spiritual, consisting in the actual conferring of sanctifying grace for the spiritual welfare of the soul in its widest application and effects. And since not the ordinary Faithful who are subject to various spiritual infirmities, and are liable to fall into more or less grievous sins, but even holy persons are to receive Extreme Unction, one need not be surprised at the state of consolation and peace that so many experience and manifest after receiving this Sacrament. And the utter absence of all fear in souls perfectly confident and resigned at the dread approach of death shows what substance is in the grace that comes with the balsam and unction of this great healing Sacrament. They say in spirit and disposition, if not in the words of Job, " For I know that my Redeemer liveth ; and in the last day I shall rise out of the earth, and in my flesh I shall see my God : Whom I myself shall see, and my eyes shall behold, and not another : this my hope is laid up in my bosom " (Job xix, 25–26). This secure confidence and almost buoyant hope so noticeable in those who have received the last Sacraments—a visible strengthening of the

soul as it is being disengaged from the ties of the body when physical weakness is at its greatest, is one of the marvellous effects of Extreme Unction.

It is due to this Sacrament to receive it in the state of grace. Being the complement of Penance, it is supposed to be given after the patient has received absolution. And as the Holy Viaticum has to be received at the approach of death, Extreme Unction is administered only after both these Sacraments have been given. When the crowning grace of this Sacrament is added after Penance and Holy Communion, the sick person, in the language of the Faithful, is prepared for death. And whether one is more subject then to the assaults of Satan, or whether the recollections of the past bring disturbing memories to the dying, it is a matter of common experience with Priests practised in preparing the Faithful for death, that while fully conscious of their approaching end, and the consequences attendant on it, the Faith, and Hope, and Charity, that are theirs, as far as one can judge, bear them in safety to eternal rest. It may happen, however, that the end may come hurriedly, and there is no time for Confession and Holy Communion. A patient may be already unconscious when the Priest arrives, and he can do no better than give a conditional absolution. But there is no certainty that such absolution is valid, even though repentance may have followed the loss of grace. But given repentance, even Imperfect Contrition since the last grievous fall, and Extreme Unction administered to an unconscious sinner will confer the grace of God and restore, on the brink of eternity, and at the gates

of Hell, a dying sinner to the friendship of his Creator, and secure his eternal salvation. Just as the Sacrament of Penance produces grace where imperfect Contrition alone is unavailing, so where even the Sacrament of Penance fails Extreme Unction will confer the grace of God, and restore even the unconscious sinner, though unconscious, to His friendship ; that is, given Imperfect Contrition at any time since the last lapse from grace, and Extreme Unction will restore grace again. Nor is any more actual intention requisite in such circumstances for the valid and fruitful reception of this Sacrament than for one who has lived as a Christian to die as a Christian. " Is any man sick among you ? let him bring in the Priests of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of Faith shall save the sick man, and the Lord shall raise him up, and if he be in sins they shall be forgiven Him " (James v, 14-15).

This Sacrament may be received more than once. As it is given on the occasion when one is in danger of dying through sickness, should such danger pass away one is again restored to the condition when the Sacrament of Extreme Unction does not apply. Whether the recovery then is only complete or partial, as long as one has escaped the danger of dying to which one has been brought down by sickness, he has emerged, too, from the state in which this Sacrament can be validly received. As often as a new danger recurs the Sacrament may be repeated.

Extreme Unction, which as we have seen, confers the grace of God on the sinner, who, while contrite, has become unconscious, is a standing monument

of the divine mercy, reaching out the hand of grace to a soul in danger, and incapable of personal effort. In later years a further extension of the use of this Sacrament has come into practice in the case of those who apparently have died some short time before the arrival of the Priest. Since medical opinion has agreed that there is no certainty of actual death, or of the separation of soul and body even when all apparent signs of life have ceased, this Sacrament may, and ought to be administered as long as what are regarded as certain and unmistakeable signs of death have not supervened. In such cases, and only in these is Extreme Unction to be administered conditionally.

The Minister of Extreme Unction, as of nearly all the Sacraments, is the Priest. So has the Apostle St. James clearly stated; and such has been the constant and invariable teaching and practice of the Church.

The Priest administers this Sacrament by anointing each of the organs of sense with Holy Oil specially blessed and ordained by the Bishop for this purpose. As sin has its origin in every case in one or another of the senses, the healing remedy for all our sins is applied at the source, the more effectually to remove all traces of it. The words appropriate to each sense employed by the Priest when he anoints the patient are the form of Extreme Unction; the anointing with appropriate oil the matter of it. As Extreme Unction is specially designed by the Divine Wisdom and Mercy to prepare us before our departure from this world of sense and temporal interests, for the Kingdon in which temporal interests are unknown, and God and

His glory are all in all to every one, we should make it frequent matter of our earnest prayers that we may receive the grace of this Sacrament at the end, and so pass out of life with all trace of the dust and stains of our sojourn here completely washed away when called to the higher and better world and life that opens to us beyond the gates of death.

CHAPTER XL.

Holy Orders.

What is Holy Orders? Holy Orders is a Sacrament which gives Bishops, Priests, and inferior Clergy to the Church, and enables them to perform their several duties in it.

As we have already seen when treating of the Sacraments in general, while they have all much in common with each other, each Sacrament has its own special virtue and purpose. All for example confer sanctifying grace, that is, they all make us better and more worthy in God's sight. But besides that, each has a grace peculiar to itself, to confer which it was purposely instituted. Now the Sacrament of Holy Orders above all the others, is remarkable for the wonderful effects—the transformation in fact—it produces on those who receive it. It is not intended for everyone, as the Sacraments we have so far considered. It is a Sacrament for men alone, and not for all men, but for those only who are called to the ministry; "neither doth

any man take the honour to himself but he that is called by God as Aaron was " (Heb. v, 4), and better than anything else, it illustrates the divine nature of that ministry, and of the whole system of which it is an element. In civil society among men one merely gets an appointment to an office. Not every one indeed, but such as have the requisite qualifications. This is true of every position in the state, in every branch of business, in every pursuit of life. But over and above all such qualifications as are requisite too, in a ministry that has to deal with men socially as individually in all classes and ranks: the ministers of the Church, for the functions of their office require a faculty, a power which does not come from nature, which is not acquired by natural effort, nor is it a patent which men can give. It comes direct from the Head of the Church—from Christ Himself, and it comes by the Sacrament of Holy Orders.

We speak of Holy Orders chiefly in connection with the Priesthood and the Episcopate, that is, considered in its highest forms. And surely that which confers the faculties associated with the Priesthood is in its way and measure unique and incomparable. By Holy Orders a man receives the power of celebrating the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and together with that the similar divine power of absolving from sin. In the Mass the words uttered by the Priest are not alone heard in Heaven, and receive attention there, but they bring down upon the Altar the Body of the Lord with its incomparable accompaniments—His Sacred Blood, with His Soul and Divinity. The Word Incarnate in the glory of Heaven becomes obed-

ient to the words of His ministers on earth, and takes the place and outward form of the elements of our sacrifice. Again, in the confessional, the sinner comes to the Priest—a man like himself, but invested with the powers conferred by Holy Orders, and he not alone receives forgiveness for his sins but these are actually washed away by the grace that comes upon his soul as the priest pronounces the words of absolution over him. Such are the effects of Holy Orders! A virtue, a faculty, a power is conferred by this Sacrament which is inherent in him who receives it, and by which he is enabled to do such wonders. And just as one who is baptized is baptized for ever, and has for ever the effects of Baptism upon him, so one who receives Holy Orders has the effects of this Sacrament and its imprint upon him for ever. By means of Holy Orders a man is transferred from the ranks of the Faithful, not by patent or commission, but by the efficacy of a Sacrament which produces its own form upon his soul, and which time or circumstances, or the power of man cannot in the least affect. The imperishable and unchanging priesthood of the Great High Priest of the New Testament is communicated to every priest at his ordination, and he is henceforth a priest for ever. "If any man say that he who was once a priest can become again a layman let him be anathema" (*Council of Trent*, Sess. xxiii).

The type of this priesthood is found, not in the priesthood of the Old Law, but is much more ancient. "For the Law brought nothing to perfection but the bringing in of a better hope" (Hebr. vii, 19). Hence was it set aside and its priesthood made to give place

to that which was typified in the older priesthood of Melchisedech, "the Lord hath sworn and he will not repent. Thou art a priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedech," said the Psalmist alluding to our Saviour (Ps. ix, 4). The sacrifices of the Old Law with the slaying of animals, and the sprinkling of blood, did their work indeed in typifying the Sacrifice of the Great Victim upon the Cross. But when He would commemorate His great Sacrifice He would go back to a finer type, and a simpler and an earlier priesthood—the Priesthood of Melchisedech, "who bringing forth bread and wine, for he was a priest of the Most High God, blessed Abraham" (Gen. xiv, 18–19.). Hence on the night of the Last Supper our Lord having instituted in the elements of bread and wine the Sacrifice of the New Law, addressing His Apostles, He imparted to them His own Priesthood by commanding them to celebrate henceforth this great commemorative Sacrifice which He celebrated then Himself for the first time. "And taking bread He gave thanks and brake, and gave to them, saying: 'This is My Body which is given for you. Do this for a commemoration of Me.' In like manner the chalice also. . . ." (Luke xxii, 19, 20). By a few simple words, as was His custom, our Lord did the greatest wonders. It is God's way, and it was His invariable practice. Almost all His miracles were done by uttering a few simple words: "I will. Be thou made clean. And when He had spoken immediately the leprosy departed from Him" (Mark i, 41, 42). "Lazarus come forth: and presently he that had been dead came forth" (John xi, 43, 44). And so at the last

Supper, having introduced the new and better Sacrifice of the New Law our Saviour, when He celebrated the First Mass, and gave Holy Communion to His Apostles, clothed them with His own priesthood, ordering them to celebrate Mass henceforth in commemoration of Him. What wonder that He selected His Apostles at an early date, and made them the familiars of His life, private and public, seeing the office He intended to raise them to! And when He invested them with His own Priesthood what more remained that was personal to Himself and sacred, to invest them with? In the Old Law the High Priest, when he entered the Holy of Holies, was vested in the robes which an elaborate ritual laid down to fit Him to minister in that place where the symbols of the Divine Presence were religiously guarded from the public gaze. Our Saviour did not discard either ceremonies or vestments in His Ministers. But while He left it to the Church to attend to these He was careful to trace the lineaments of His own Priesthood on the souls of His ministers, making them in the fullest sense, in His own sacred capacity of High Priest, His representatives on earth. Here indeed is the ideal of the sacredness which mankind has ever associated with the Priesthood realized above expectation.

The Apostles in their day raised to the same sacred office with the powers they had received from their Master, others whom they had found worthy of so great distinction—not indeed by any authoritative address, which was the special faculty of our Saviour, but by the use of the appropriate matter and form which He had designated. The first instance of this is recorded

in the Sixth Chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, and deserves attention. The Faithful, by this time, were greatly increased in numbers, and the cares of the Apostles correspondingly enlarged and diversified. To meet a situation which was outgrowing the capacity of a few men, how gifted soever, the necessity of assistance was apparent. "Hence the Twelves calling together the multitude of the Disciples said . . . . Look ye out among you seven men of good reputation full of the Holy Ghost and Widsom, whom we may appoint over this business. . . . and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Ghost, and Philip, etc., . . . these they set before the Apostles, and they praying, imposed hands upon them" (Act. vi, 3-6). Here we notice that when the men described by the Apostles were selected and presented to them they did not give them their commission on the strength of the qualifications they already possessed. Only after they had prayed, and imposed hands on them, were they admitted to a share in the ministry. Now these are the persons who are known as the Seven Deacons—who received Deacons' Orders from the Apostles. For, as is well known, there are various degrees of Orders. There are what are known as the Minor and Major Orders. Each of these orders confers faculties for the function proper to it in the Sacred Ministry. Nor would anyone expect that except by degrees would one be advanced to an office so sacred and to the possession of powers so wonderful as those that belong to the Priesthood. "If anyone should say that besides the Priesthood there are not in the Catholic Church other orders both Major and Minor,

by which as by certain steps one ascends to the priesthood let him be anathema" says the Council of Trent (Sess. xxiii, Can. 2). Express mention is made in the Scriptures, as the same Council states, of Deaconship and Priesthood, and from the early days of the Church the names of the order of Sub-deacon, acolyte, exorcists, lectors and ostiarii are mentioned and the functions proper to each are specified. (Sess. xxiii, cap 2). These we find mentioned as far back as A.D. 250 in a letter of Pope St. Cornelius, and they have been recognized, and in use in the Church ever since. Just as in the Public Service or in the Army there are different grades and one advances from the lowest to the highest rank, so in the Sacred Ministry. But with the difference, that it is not because of the knowledge and experience that come with years, as in secular employments, one is advanced to the higher offices of the Church, but because one has received orders at the hands of the Bishop who is the minister of this Sacrament. Each of the orders in succession confers its own faculties or powers, until one at last receives the Priesthood or the Episcopate, the highest rank of Orders. For orders were instituted and are given to enable a person to perform validly the acts of the sacred ministry, that is acts of spiritual and supernatural character and efficacy of a certain kind, for which special appropriate powers are requisite. For example without the power of forgiving sins, which is given in the Priesthood, one could not absolve, and so of the other orders.

Only the Bishop, or one who has received the Sacrament of Holy Orders in its fullness, can confer orders.

This is the unchanging teaching and practice of that Church from the days of the Apostles. St. Paul consecrated Timothy and Titus his disciples, as bishops: "I admonish thee that thou stir up the grace of God which is in thee by the imposition of my hands" (II Tim. i, 6). And in turn he warns him "Impose not hands lightly on any man" (Ep. i, v). And writing to Titus he says "For this cause I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldst ordain priests in every city as I also appointed thee" (Titus i, 5). Extol as writers might the power of the Priesthood, no one speaking in the name of the Church or expounding her teaching ever claimed for the Priest the power to confer Orders. Indeed in the absence of this power in the Priesthood strictly so called is recognized the outstanding difference between Priests and Bishops. "What," says St. Jerome, "except to ordain, can a Bishop do that a Priest cannot." The teaching of the Church in this matter was laid down by the Council of Trent, when it pronounced anathema on anyone who should say that Bishops are not superior to Priests or that they have not power to confirm or ordain, or that what powers they have are common to Priests, and to themselves (Sess. xxiii, Can. 7). Not alone in authority to rule and govern and in powers of administration are Bishops over the Clergy but in this, that they have received the Sacrament of Holy Orders in its fullness and have faculties to perform effectually all the acts that come within the compass of the Priesthood of the New Law. Hence can they confer this Sacrament of Orders, and indeed they alone have ever been recognized as ministers of it. The ordinary minister

of sacred ordination is a consecrated Bishop (*New Code,* Canon 951). The Sacrament of Orders, as St. Thomas explains (Supp. 37, A. 2), is instituted chiefly with a view to the Blessed Eucharist, the most sacred of the Sacraments, and the centre of Catholic worship. And Orders are different according to the various services which surround the Blessed Eucharist. Minor Orders which are Four in number, designate the Services that but remotely concern the Blessed Eucharist. Major Orders which begin with Subdeaconship confer power to minister immediately at the altar, either as the celebrant, who is the Priest, or as assisting the celebrant as Deacon or Subdeacon. Each of the Orders has its own proper Matter and Form indicative of the power conferred on the recipient. In the case of the Priesthood the Bishop hands the Chalice with wine and the paten with bread to the person who is being ordained, saying as he does : " Receive the power to offer Sacrifice in the Church for the living and the dead." Afterwards he addresses the words to him that express the power of forgiving sins. Appropriate Matter and Form is used when he raises a candidate to Subdeaconship and Deaconship.

From the example of our Lord Himself in dealing with the Apostles, and from the great care they in turn manifested in selecting persons for the Sacred Ministry as well as from her own sense of its necessity, in nothing has the Church shown greater solicitude than in the selection and training of Candidates for Holy Orders. Raised above the Faithful by power more suitable for Angels, than for men, she expects and exacts in her ministers not a knowledge of, and

familiarity with sacred things alone, above the level of the people, but a degree of virtue correspondingly great. Hence from their tender years, from early youth at any rate, collected into seminaries and colleges specially provided for the purpose where they receive a liberal education under experienced directors, all of them Priests, the candidates for Holy Orders are trained to virtue and imbued with the sense of the sacredness and responsibilities of the office they aspire to, and of the religious character of the life which the Priesthood requires (*New Code*, Can. 972). Not before one has reached his twenty-second year are the first of the Major Orders conferred. The vows of celibacy, and obedience to one's Bishop which go with Subdeaconship finally decide a young man's course in life. Yet not before he has completed his twenty-fourth year is he advanced to the Priesthood (*New Code*, Can. 975). Not character alone which is a requisite foundation, but a virtuous life men demand in the Priest. The Church, which has a just sense of the sacredness of the Priesthood of Christ, in which her Priests participate, and of the Divine things in which they minister, requires them to be more than virtuous, to be even holy. And as their lives are known to the people to whom they minister, and as they are seen by friend and foe alike as they mix among them in daily intercourse, what grander testimony to the Divine character of the religion of which they are ministers than the honour in which they are held, and the respect shown everywhere and with so much reason, to the Catholic Priest. By means of this Sacrament the sanctity and self-sufficiency of the Church are maintained and made manifest. Through it

the Priesthood is perpetuated and kept up to its own high standard of excellence and virtue, and the light and grace to enlighten and sanctify the Faithful are secured. What wisdom and knowledge, and power and goodness in Him by whom so great grace has been given to the world.

CHAPTER XLI.

Matrimony.

What is Matrimony?

"Matrimony is a Sacrament which gives grace to a husband and wife to live happy together and to bring up their children in the fear and Love of God."

When we consider the place assigned to Matrimony in the economy of nature, and what vital interests centre in it, we are not surprised that our Saviour who came to regenerate mankind bestowed on it the highest marks of His appreciation and enriched it with special blessings. The home in which He was pleased to pass the years of His private life was established by Matrimony, for Joseph was the husband of His Mother, the Virgin Mary. Early in His Public Life He showed His appreciation of Matrimony by His Presence at the Marriage Feast of Cana (John ii), and He gave further sign of His appreciation by making His presence at this festival the occasion of His first public miracle. What views prevailed in His day

in reference to marriage that were at variance with it as originally instituted, He corrected. And the practices that had grown up with time and had obtained the sanction of the Law, that were opposed to the integrity and finality of the marriage contract, He did away with for good. In short he restored marriage to the unity and indissolubility it possessed in Eden when contracted by our First Parents in the beginning (for such is marriage as it was instituted then for the first time). And the contract of marriage, so restored and perfected, He raised to the rank of a Sacrament. Hence from the institution of Our Blessed Saviour, Matrimony is one of the Sacraments of the New Law.

In its nature Matrimony is a contract by which duly qualified persons, a man and a woman, bind themselves to each other for the purpose of marriage in domestic association till death. The reason assigned in Holy Writ for the creation of woman the first day is that man is not sufficient for himself—could not well meet all his own requirements without a helper. "It is not good for man to be alone, let us make him a help like unto himself" said the Creator (Gen. ii, 18), and this before the Fall. Then to show how little other from himself was his helper—how almost another self, we have but to notice how Eve, the first woman, came to be created. God did not form her out of the slime of the earth—the material from which He created Adam, but casting a deep sleep upon him He took a rib out of his side and of this rib He formed the body of Eve, his consort. And Adam realizing whence Eve had come, the moment he saw her said, "This now is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called

woman because she is taken out of man" (Gen. ii, 21-23). While Adam is thus shown to be the head and source of the human race, the unity and almost identity of himself and her who was created to be his partner and helper in life, could not well be made more manifest. And he added, "Wherefore a man shall leave father and mother and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh" (Gen. ii, 24). One thing seems to have impressed Adam, who broke out into these words the moment he beheld the partner God had provided for Him, viz., the intimacy and strength of the union that would bind man and wife to each other in the future. Speaking not for himself and his consort alone, but speaking prophetically, and seeing in the ensuing course of years the alliances that would be made, he saw how even the ties of children to their parents—the closest and most intimate ties of nature—would yield place to a stronger tie, and the influence of a more compelling attraction, and that man would leave father and mother, and all the ties of home and cleave to his wife, and that they would both be bound to each other by an association that would make them one flesh. The union, not to say the unity of husband and wife could not well be more emphatically affirmed. Nor is it without special significance that the thoughts and mind of Adam on this occasion are expressed and recorded. He then declared the nature of the relations between husband and wife, of which he and his partner were the exemplar. It is to be noted, too, that this was before the Fall, when Adam and Eve were fresh from the hand of the Creator and were endowed with the best gifts of nature, and with gifts

that were above it. And with the light of Prophecy in his mind he declared that the strongest bonds of nature would be sundered by the stronger relations still, that would bind each man to that woman, who in the years to come would be made the partner of his life and the sharer of his fortune. Here, then, is the ideal of marriage—a union of one man with one woman and this so strong that the strongest bonds of nature must yield place to it. Any departure from this ideal is a departure from marriage as it was instituted at first, and as it was then declared to be in the future by the Father of the race, speaking of the marriages of his posterity for all time.

Notwithstanding the fact that there is thus no suggestion of a second or other consort for Adam during the lifetime of Eve; that his language and all the circumstances of the situation that explain the origin of Eve, exclude the idea of a second wife, during the lifetime of the first, polygamy came into use in after years by some of his descendants. But it is to be noted that the introduction of polygamy is condemned as an abuse, and that Lamec who introduced it, taking a second wife, is condemned by holy writers as guilty of adultery. Nicholas I, Pope, A.D. 858, says, " the crime of adultery of which Lamec was guilty in taking a second wife." Long before this St. Jerome, *contra jovin*, and Tertullian " On Chastity " vehemently condemned the first introduction of a second wife, as a gross abuse of marriage. Though no hindrance, it is true, to the primary purpose of marriage, polygamy is subversive of the harmony and happiness which marriage was instituted to promote. In the Patriarchal time, and

long afterwards, it had become a custom, and when the circumstance permitted to avail of the custom was sinless. But a practice so liable to abuse, so opposed to the original idea and institution of marriage, and above all so contrary to the ideal of morality introduced by our Saviour, had small chance of escaping His censure, and He definitely forbade it for all time among Christians. Even in the case where a man is at liberty to put away his wife, He forbade Him, under the most grievous penalty to take another. "Whoseover shall put away his wife. . . . . and shall marry another committeth adultery" (Matt. xix, 9). And hence the unity of Christian marriage has always been a doctrine of the Catholic Church. Nicholas I ad Bulgaros says: "To have two wives at the same time is forbidden, as well by the original condition of human life, as by the Christian law." St. Ambrose, some centuries earlier (Lib. ii de Abraham) "To look for a second wife during the lifetime of the first is to be guilty of adultery." Pope Innocent III, much later: "If when the first wife is sent away another cannot be lawfully introduced, much less when the first is retained" (Chap. Gaudemus de Divortiis). In keeping with this invariable teaching of the Church is the language of the Council of Trent, which pronounces anathema on "any one who should say that it is lawful for a Christian to have two wives at the same time, and that there is no divine law that forbids it" (Sess. xxiv, 2). According to the infallible teaching of the Church then, bigamy is sinful, and it is so decreed by the law of God. Indeed the moral sense of men has at all times been in favour of the inviolable unity

of marriage, nor has any reason to the contrary, in any case, been regarded as of force in the face of the degrading consequences attendant on a departure from the elevating moral principle implied to it.

In the Old Law Divorce was permitted in certain circumstances (Deuter. xxiv), but our Lord revoked a permission that He declared was a concession yielded to Jewish perversity. Recalling the original institution of marriage, according to which man and wife were bound to each other inseparably till death, He made the marriage contract henceforth a life-long engagement which no power on earth could dissolve. His words, recorded in the Gospel, give the law of marriage that He promulgated, and which is to bind Christians for all time. Questioned by the Pharisees if it was lawful for a man to put away his wife for any cause, He said, " Have ye not read that He who made man from the beginning made them male and female," and He said, " For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife ; and they two shall be one flesh . . . what therefore God hath joined together let no man put asunder. They say to Him : Why then did Moses command to give a bill of divorce : and to put away ? He sayeth to them because Moses by reason of the hardness of your heart permitted you to put away your wives ; but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery ; and he that shall marry her that is put away committeth adultery " (Matt. xix, 4-9). Marriage therefore, as originally instituted, was a life-long union of man and

wife, so united that they were declared not by Adam, indeed alone, but by Adam speaking for God, as our Saviour states, to be not two, but one flesh. This condition would our Saviour restore and establish as the law of marriage which no man dare violate. "What therefore, God hath joined together let no man put asunder" (Matt. xix, 6). Separation He indeed. allowed for one great cause, but it is only a partial separation that leaves the marriage tie untouched. In this case of conjugal infidelity, outside the Church men have held, and hold, that the marriage bond may be broken. The law, in many countries that have fallen from the faith, pretends to free husband and wife from their union with each other in such a case. But it is a vain attempt, for Christian marriage once perfected by the use of conjugal rights can be dissolved by death alone. The Church itself, to which her Founder gave almost unlimited powers within her own province, is powerless to break the marriage bond in such a case. Her teaching on this point is consistent and unequivocal. It is the teaching of St. Paul in his letter to the Romans where he assigns death alone as the legitimate cause of a second marriage. "A woman whilst her husband liveth is bound to the law. But if her husband be dead she is loosed from the law of her husband. Therefore while her husband liveth she shall be called an adulteress if she be with another man" (Rom. vii, 23). And writing to the Corinthians he lays down the same doctrine in the same words. "A woman is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband die she is at liberty; let her marry to whom she will, only in the Lord" (1 Cor. vii, 39). St. Paul knows

no circumstances in which a woman may, during the lifetime of her husband, marry another man. Death alone, he teaches, will release her from her obligations to him, and set her at liberty to marry another. And this the Church has taught from the first day onwards. Hermas, a writer of the apostolic age, in his work entitled "Pastor," says, "A man who attempts to marry another woman during the life of an adulterous wife is guilty of adultery." "Death," says St. Augustine, "not conjugal infidelity breaks the marriage tie—*De adulterivis conjugiis.*" The Fifth Canon of St. Patrick gives us the teaching of the Irish Church in this matter. It says, "If the wife of any man should commit adultery the injured husband shall not marry another as long as the wife lives." And St. Thomas, "Nothing supervening on marriage can dissolve it, and therefore not even adultery can make it other than a true marriage" (Suppl. Q. 62, A. 5). In keeping with this teaching is the language of the Council of Trent, laying down officially the doctrine of the Church. In Sess. XIV, Canon vii, it pronounces anathema on any one who should say that the Church is in error when it taught, and teaches according to the Gospel, and Apostolic doctrine, that the bond of marriage cannot be broken on account of the adultery of one of the parties; and that even the innocent party who is not responsible for the adultery, cannot as long as the other lives contract another marriage. This teaching on the indissolubility of marriage even in the case which of all others might appear to give reason for the dissolution of the marriage tie, shows that a marriage is absolutely a lifelong indissoluble engagement. The apparent excep-

tion made by our Saviour in the text of St. Matthew (xix) applies only to partial separation of the married parties. Surely the teaching of the Church in her Synods, and Councils, and the language of the Fathers and Doctors in a long succession of centuries, and the actual mind of the Church to our day, give us the law of Christ in such an important matter. Nor is there anything one can think of more opposed to the morality of the Gospel than that a woman guilty of adultery should be at liberty to break away from her husband, and while he is yet living to live with another man. And surely if a woman who is put away for a less serious crime could not marry during her husband's lifetime, it was putting a premium on adultery, if a woman found guilty of that crime was at liberty to marry. Our Lord indeed allowed her to be put away for this cause, but He was careful to add, that should any man marry her while she is separated from her husband he would be guilty of adultery. "And he that shall marry her that is put away committeth adultery" (Matt. xix).

In the course of history there is nothing that more strikingly illustrates the consistent teaching of the Church than her unchanging doctrine and practice on the unity and indissolubility of Christian Marriage. No matter what circumstances arose, no matter what influences were tried and from what powerful quarters emanating, the same *non-possumus* answer was delivered in every case of a petition in which either of these qualities of Matrimony was involved. For Christian Marriage is one and indissoluble, and death alone can release the parties from their mutual obligations (*New Code*, Can. 1118). The course of history

might indeed be different in the English-speaking world, and in the British possessions especially if a monarch was allowed to put away his queen during her lifetime and marry another woman. But the Gospel teaching, which is unchanging as the foundations of the universe, forbade it and till "heaven and earth pass away, one jot or tittle shall not pass of the law till all be fulfilled "(Matt. v, 18). Hence one husband and one wife till death, as the "Gospel and apostolic doctrine" lay down, and because, "nothing supervening on marriage can break its union," and to this teaching the Church has consistently adhered.

According to the New Code as well as to the Decree "*Ne Temere*," all baptized persons are included in the scope of this law of Christian marriage. Among baptized persons only, is Christian marriage possible. And among Christians, marriage is not merely a contract as we have described, but it is also a Sacrament. The doctrine that Matrimony is one of the Sacraments of the New Law is officially declared in Can. x (Sess. xxiv) of the Council of Trent, which says "If anyone should say that Matrimony is not truly and properly one of the Seven Sacraments of the New Law instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ, but that it was introduced into the Church by men and that it does not confer grace, let him be anathema." When giving the number and names of the Sacraments it mentioned Matrimony also with the others (Sess. vii). This teaching of course, was nothing new at the time of the Council of Trent. It was declared long before at the Council of Florence under Pope Eugenius IV, and in the Council of the Lateran under Innocent III, much earlier still, in

A.D. 1190, and every time as the recognized doctrines of the Church. Indeed back in the earliest ages Matrimony is numbered among the Sacraments. And when the terms of Theology were less clearly defined than they became in the hands of the schoolmen in the Middle Ages, we find the Fathers and Doctors who treated of Matrimony, speak of it as a sacred thing, and a fount of grace—a sacrament in every respect except the name. St. Cyril of Alexandria, A.D. 430, says: "Christ sanctified Matrimony and prepared grace for nuptials so as to bless human nature in its course (Lib. II, on St. John, ii, 2). St. Innocent Pope, to Probus. "We lay down in accordance with the teaching of the Catholic Faith that that alone is marriage which was celebrated with divine grace." He lived about the same time. St. Augustine, a contemporary of these, or about it, in his work on St. John, C. 17, says: "Christ when invited came to the marriage feast to strengthen conjugal chastity as well as to show forth the Sacrament of Matrimony". Here it is expressly called a Sacrament: and again in his work on marriage he says, "In the marriage of Christians the sanctity of the Sacrament counts for more than the fecundity of the womb." The same teaching borrowed of course from the Church from which they had fallen away, is found among the chief heretical sects of the earlier centuries. The Copts, Nestorians, and other forms of Greek heresy all hold Matrimony among the Sacraments. Indeed it was hardly ever disputed among the Christians until we come to the time of the reformers, that Matrimony was a source of grace, that it should be contracted in the state of grace to be worthily received, that it

was usual to have the nuptial blessing given during the celebration of Mass, as we learn from Tertullian A.D. 200 ; in short that it had all the characteristics of a Sacrament. Hence it was definitely declared to be a Sacrament in the official language of the Church, in more than one of her General Councils. To this fact and to the proper appreciation of it, it is due that the marriage of Catholics, almost in all cases, are endowed with the blessings of happiness and peace. The difficulties of which one hears so much among people who are strangers to the Faith are either not known at all, or are easily made little of among the members of the Church. Among the poor, as among the rich, in trials, disappointments, and sorrows, as in prosperity and success, husband and wife have " but one heart and one mind " (Acts iv). " This is a great Sacrament," says St. Paul, speaking of Matrimony in his Epistle to the Ephesians (v, 32). In nothing is its greatness so manifest as in the success with which it binds two persons of temperaments, dispositions and inclinations often quite dissimilar into a harmonious union, in which love, sympathy, and a ready spirit of sacrifice issue in a life of whole-hearted co-operation inspired by deep natural affection. Among such people there is little thought of separation or divorce—little serious misunderstanding, thanks to the prevailing grace of a sacrament given on purpose to bring about such happy results. Even in the exceedingly rare cases when a separation is sought there is never an idea of another marriage.

The ministers of the Sacrament of Matrimony are the contracting parties themselves. Matrimony, that

is the contract by which a man and woman bind themselves to each other till death in matrimonial union, is one of the Sacraments of the New Law—that is, the matrimonial contract is a Sacrament (*New Code*, C. 1012). This of course is the joint act of both contracting parties, who are consequently the ministers of the Sacrament at the same time that they make the contract. From this it follows that there is no possibility of separating the Sacrament of Matrimony from the civil contract as it is sometimes called. There is no civil contract at all, for it is all sacred now by the institution of Christ, who made the contract a sacrament for all Christians. Nor does the Priest, how necessary soever for the valid celebration of Matrimony, act in the capacity of a minister of the Sacrament, as in the case of all the others, for the sacramental effect is produced by the parties themselves when they bind themselves to each other by their plighted word (St. Thomas, Suppl. Q. 45). The Priest gives the blessing of the Church it is true, but that is added on to the ceremony already completed, and his presence as her qualified representative is essential to give it the publicity which, being wanting in clandestine marriages makes them invalid. The Matter and Form of the Sacrament are the words of the contracting parties as they express the proposal and the acceptance of the obligation, as St. Thomas (Suppl. Q. 42, A. 3), and others explain. The words that express the proposal are the Matter: those that express the acceptance of it are the Form of the Sacrament

Raising Matrimony to the rank and condition of a Sacrament, our Saviour placed it at once under

the authority and jurisdiction of the Church. To her He entrusted all His interests. This the charge confided to her care! Nor can any persons meddle in the affairs entrusted to her guardianship without going outside their proper sphere, and acting beyond their commission. The civil effects indeed of matrimony have no immediate concern for the Church. But we are not treating of the effects of Matrimony, civil or otherwise: we are treating of Matrimony, itself which is a Sacrament. For this reason it pertains to the Church to see to it, and to lay down what conditions appear to her necessary or appropriate to guarantee its becoming celebration at all times. The civil power, not content with making regulations concerning the temporal effects of Matrimony, often ventured to trespass here. Even Catholic Princes, as Francis Joseph of Austria, in the time of Pope Pius VI, have thought it not unbecoming to attempt to extend their authority to the regulation of the marriages of their subjects. But taught by an enlightening experience the Austrian Emperor learned what are the boundaries of the civil power in this matter, and as a dutiful son of the Church left it to her Head—his inalienable right indeed—to make laws for the administration of Matrimony, as of the other Sacraments, within his dominions.

Conscious of the importance of Matrimony as an institution of nature for the continued existence and well-being of the human race (for which reasons indeed her Divine Founder endowed it with so many and such graces), the Church has shown at all times the greatest solicitude for its proper celebration. From the earliest date there have been evidences of this. St. Ignatius,

Martyr, who lived in the time of the Apostles, in one of his letters says, : " Those marriages are celebrated in the Lord that are entered into with the approval of the Bishop." The nuptial blessing was introduced at an early date, as we see from Tertullian, and Clement of Alexandria (Lib. III, Paedogogi). Seasons of penance such as Lent and Advent were deemed unsuitable for the festivities generally attendant on marriage, and were closed against it. But the most notable action taken by the Church in reference to marriage is the introducing of what is known as impediments. These are of two kinds, viz., those that make the marriage unlawful, and those that void it or make it null altogether. Under the new Code there are practically only two impediments that make a marriage unlawful—a vow of Chastity or not to marry, and a difference in religion, i.e., when one of the parties is a Catholic, the other a non-Catholic Christian. A dispensation from these impediments for sufficient reasons can be obtained, and the marriage then contracted, notwithstanding such disabilities, is valid and lawful, Diriment impediments are more numerous, and call for some words of exposition. Conscious of the grave issues always involved in marriage, and with a full sense of her responsibility for its due celebration as a Sacrament, the Church has taken what action seemed good to her to make sure that it should be approached in every case with a becoming sense of its sacredness and importance. The right of people to marry, the Church of course has never questioned. But wherever the grave interests of others would be seriously injured or endangered ; where the natural

rights of the children would be prejudiced, or the natural rights and liberty of the contracting parties themselves and in other such like cases, the Church has stepped in, and by her Impediments made marriage in such cases impossible, and invalid if attempted. Among the most notable of these Impediments are Solemn Vows, such as those taken by professed Religious, and by Clergy when they receive Holy Orders, Persons within certain degrees of consanguinity, as second cousins and those more nearly related to each other, or of affinity, as first cousins.

A marriage of a Catholic not celebrated before the Parish Priest of the place where the marriage is celebrated or another Priest with his permission or the permission of the Bishop, with two witnesses, is what is called a clandestine marriage, and since the time of the Council of Trent such marrriages are invalid. Guided by experience gained during the course of centuries and directed by the light of the Holy Spirit, and actuated solely by a desire for the happiness of the contracting parties and the welfare of their children, and of society as a whole, the Church has decreed what marriages are lawful, and what not; what are valid marriages, and what are marriages only in name. The power of the Church to constitute diriment impediments and so effectually to bar the way against improper marriages has been put beyond doubt by the decree of the Council of Trent (Can. iv, Sess. xxiv), which declares anathema on anyone who should deny this power as residing in the Church. It must not be forgotten, however, that the power that established impediments can take them away again, and on good cause shown

in particular cases the Church, though reluctant, is not averse to the removal of one or more impediments to a marriage. Placing marriage in the charge of the Church our Saviour did the greatest service to society, as to individuals, nor is there anything one can think of over which her vigilant and enlightened care can be more properly and profitably exercised than over marriage, the source of the family, the heart and centre of society, and the largest determining factor in the life and progress of a people. Because such is marriage—because so many and so vital issues centre on it, our Saviour made so much of it, restored it to its original condition of unity and indissolubility, and sanctified the contract by which marriage is entered into by making it a Sacrament. For the same reasons the Church has fenced it round with so many conditions. Impressed with a sense of what weighty interests for families and for society depend upon it, and solicitous for the progress of humanity, and the normal and material uplifting of the race, she has forbidden those alliances which are not conducive to such desirable and necessary ends.

Is there an obligation to marry? Whatever may be said of the race as a whole, and the instincts of self-preservation in the race may be relied upon to meet all demands in that direction, there is no obligation on an individual to marry. The language of St. Paul in his First Epistle to the Corinthians (Chap. vii, 8), is clear as to the non-existence of an obligation. "But I say to the unmarried and to the widows; it is good for them even if they continue as I". Long before him the Creator explained marriage on the ground

of expediency, and not of necessity: "It is not good for a man to be alone, let us make him a help like unto himself" (Gen. ii, 18), and no higher reason can be alleged in its favour. St. Paul, while he is clear that there is nothing wrong in getting married, says one does better who does not marry: and advises it only when there may be danger of some contingent evil that marriage will obviate (1 Epistle Cor., vii). And the Church, by the Council of Trent (Sess. xxiv, Can. 10), declares virginity or celibacy a better state than marriage.

When a marriage is about to take place timely notice should be given to the parish priest, who is the official representative of the Church in this matter. Where the banns of marriage are published, as in most places these must be publicly announced on three consecutive Sundays previous to the celebration. Where this custom does not exist timely notice should be given to the parish priest, so that, should any canonical impediment be discovered, such action as the circumstances demand may be taken before the date fixed for the marriage. The advice of the parents should be sought, and their consent and approval obtained in a matter of so great importance in the family, and in which they are so nearly interested; this is especially so in the case of minors (*New Code*, Canon 1034).

Matrimony is a Sacrament of the Living, and therefore must be received in a state of grace. The contracting parties should be careful in an event of so great importance in their lives to prepare beforehand by a good Confession and Holy Communion, and by fervent prayer implore God's blessing on their union.

The Nuptial blessing prepared by the Church for the occasion of the Marriage of the Faithful, and which may not be given out of Mass, is sufficient indication that it is her wish that marriages should be attended by the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice. Special Diocesan Legislation requires this in some places. By special enactment—Canon 1099—it is expressly declared that non-Catholics are not required to conform to the Catholic form of celebrating marriage when they marry among themselves.

We have treated of the Sacraments now one by one, and have seen in what each of them consists, and to what situations and contingencies in life they are adapted. But whenever they are to be received, and to whatever conditions applicable, they are a standing proof of the wonderful love of our Saviour who designed such and so many ways of conveying to us the best fruits of Redemption, viz., Sanctifying and Actual Grace.

CHAPTER XLII.

Other Aids to Grace.

The Sacraments and Prayer are the two great means of Grace we have in the Church. And they are special and peculiar to it. Not indeed that anyone may not pray. Prayer is the language of the mind and heart addressed to the Creator; and doubtless every Christian, not to say every human being, at one time or

another turns to Him to lay before Him his aspirations and desires. But the Catholic is taught to pray as a matter of duty in the morning and evening of every day ; on Sunday, which by the Law of God and of His Church is dedicated to divine worship ; and in all dangers, temptations and trials. When Pope Leo XIII was sending over the world his immortal encyclicals on ethical and social questions he was appealing, at the same time, by his letters on the Rosary, to the Faithful to turn to God and to the Blessed Virgin, and so endeavour by prayer to obtain the help and relief he saw the world was so much in need of. To discharge this duty of prayer properly we are taught what prayers are most suitable to the various times and purposes of prayer. Nothing is left to impulse or our own untutored efforts. The sanction of the Church is attached to those prayers most in use, and all, or nearly all the short ejaculatory prayers that may be said at any time, are enriched with indulgences. Hence while the Faithful all over the world turn to God so frequently, addressing their petitions to Him, to the Blessed Virgin, and the Saints, there is going up at all times before the divine Majesty the aspirations of the people expressed in suitable form, from all the quarters of the earth. And while honour is thus paid to the divine Majesty, and to the Paternal Providence of God, blessings of all kinds come down upon the world in answer to these supplications. Such the function and the effect of prayer.

The Sacraments, as we have seen, are different. They are adapted, most of them, to the great crises or turns in a man's life, and are the agencies of grace,

both sanctifiying and actual, to all who receive them. To receive them at the proper times, is a characteristic Catholic practice, and in the case of Penance and Holy Communion one that cannot be too often repeated.

A familiar practice among the faithful which is fostered and encouraged by the Church is devotion to the Blessed Virgin and the Saints. Justification for this devotion is found in the Gospel story. Meagre though the Gospel references to the Blessed Virgin are, (though she filled so large a place in the Mystery of the Incarnation, and in the subsequent life of our Saviour), we can gather from them the lesson of her importance as an intermediary with her Divine Son, and the strength of His piety towards her as His mother. The first public miracle He wrought was at her suggestion at the Marriage Feast of Cana (John ii, 8), and the last act of His life was to make provision for her future by entrusting her to the care of His beloved Disciple. But He did not assign her to him as a ward, or appoint him as a guardian over her. He substituted the Apostle for Himself, making him her son, and her He made the Mother of His disciple. " Woman, behold thy son. After that He said to the disciple, Behold thy mother " (John xix, 26, 27). And from that hour the feeling of a mother for her children, and of children towards their mother, are those that subsist between the Blessed Virgin and the Faithful. To that position and office He advanced her with His dying words. Her interests, indeed, as the Mother of the Saviour are centred in Him and His life work. And as His passage from this world made no difference in His support of the Church and its members, her re-

ception into heaven but widened the field of her usefulness, and intensified the power of her influence. The history of the Church is full of proofs of what the Blessed Virgin can do, and has done indeed, to sustain and support her in many a grave crisis. Evidence of the devotion of the Faithful to her is spread all over the centuries. As she is the highest in Heaven over all God's creatures she comes next to Him in the veneration of the Faithful. And sinner and saint alike will ever find the surest way to the favour of the Saviour when led by the hand of His Mother. Grace follows the ways of nature, does not destroy, but perfects it. Hence will the Church ever turn to the Mother of God, and will she teach her children through the ages to turn to her; to honour her indeed for her worthiness, and to secure the blessing of her intercession. This sound lesson we have learned from the past. It is a lesson the future will ever inculcate.

In a less degree do we honour the Saints, and seek their intercession. Conscious of our wants and demerits, we are glad to find friends more acceptable with God to plead our cause with Him. Conscious too of the virtues and merits of His saints, we are glad to pay them the tribute of our respect and veneration. We cling to our friends in spite of death, and when assured of their happiness, and of their interest in our welfare, while we pay them the tribute due to their merits, it is but natural to seek the help of their intercession.

Besides devotion to the Blessed Virgin and the Saints there are other practices of a like nature with which we are familiar and of corresponding effects and influence. Foremost among these is the use of

the Sign of the Cross—a most ancient Catholic usage. As the instrument of our Redemption, the Cross is the ensign or standard of our Blessed Saviour. By the Cross He satisfied for the sins of the world, broke the power of Satan over us, set up His own Kingdom on its ruins, and opened to us the gates of heaven. To mark anything with the Sign of the Cross is to show that it belongs to Christ, that it is no longer one of the common things of the world, but is sacred because this mark is upon it. To make the Sign of the Cross was a favourite practice from the earliest times. We see from the Epistles of St. Paul (Gal. vi, 14), the Faithful were taught to hold the Cross in supreme reverence and make the Sign of the Cross upon themselves. St. Cryil of Jerusalem, to name but one of the Fathers, writing in the fourth century (350 A.D.), exhorts the people to make the Sign of the Cross upon themselves at every turn and to put it upon everything they touched. Selected by our Saviour as the altar on which He would offer His great Redeeming Sacrifice, the Cross is sacred above all appreciation; and by the use of this sacred symbol the Church imparts blessings and sacredness to everything. Nothing indeed is blessed by the Church without making the Sign of the Cross upon it. And just as to rear the Cross upon a building is to show that it is devoted to a sacred purpose—is in fact the property of Christ; to make the Sign of the Cross upon ourselves is to dedicate ourselves to Him, and to seek His protection and grace. In making it we invoke the names of the Three Divine Persons of the Blessed Trinity—to make the Sign of the Cross, therefore, is

to make a short profession of Faith. No wonder the Sign of the Cross is a favourite devotion, and the Cross an object of the greatest veneration.

After the Sign of the Cross much devotion centres round the use of Holy Water. One might well say indeed, if there is an element in nature that might be made to minister to the purposes of piety it is water. We have seen that Baptism, the first and most essential of the Sacraments is administered in water. We know from the Scriptures that water on occasions was endowed with supernatural virtue (John v, 4). Our Saviour recognized the healing virtue of the Pool of Siloe, and sent the blind man whose eyes he anointed with moistened clay to wash in it, and he came back seeing (John ix, 7). The Saints of the Church have been indebted often to a spring in arid situations to slake their thirst during their long vigils, and gave in return a blessing to the water, which has survived long after them. In Ireland one frequently comes upon a "Blessed Well"—that is a spring beside which one of our Saints centuries ago, spent years of rigid asceticism and prayer, and gained for that water (the only drink he allowed himself), a healing virtue which still continues. Hence the devout visits the people pay to these wells on the anniversaries of the Saints, whose names are associated in popular tradition with them. The water of Lourdes in our day is world famous for the virtue of healing attached to it. The practice of blessing water, which the celebrant sprinkles on the people before Mass, is well known. To reserve this blessed water at the porch, or beside the entrance to the Church, is only a variant of this usage.* The

prayers employed by the Church when blessing water shows that virtue is imparted to it to expel the evil one, and secure freedom from his influence for those on whom the water is sprinkled. For this and similar uses the people are encouraged to take Holy Water to their homes and to sprinkle it on themselves, their houses, and their property.

These and similar accessories of religion have their own spiritual influence, and help to foster and maintain in the people the spirit of piety and devotion, and to bring down God's blessing upon them. They are not, of course, the essentials of religion ; they are, as it were, the atmosphere in which religion energizes ; and an unfailing experience of centuries shows how helpful and beneficial in many ways are they found to be. Our mixed nature craves for sensible forms as aids to our spiritual activities, nor can we give expression to the feelings of the heart, whether natural or supernatural, except in outward symbols. Hence, if we use Rosaries, and Scapulars, and Medals, and such like, we do so because a nature like ours that is corporal as well as spiritual, that draws its inspirations in the first instance from the world of sense around us ("There is nothing in the intellect" as St. Thomas says, "that was not first in the senses"), cannot dispense with sensible things. The nature that demands a Church or Temple wherein to worship God who is a Spirit, and is everywhere, demands the aids which Beads, and Crosses, Holy Water, and Medals, and such religious objects contribute, and is benefited by their use. They help to quicken our devotion. They help to fix our attention better while at prayer, and they

furnish many appropriate reflections and thoughts. The use of them has the sanction of the Church. They are blessed and Indulgenced by her, and so are made the medium of spiritual favours.

CHAPTER XLIII.

"The Resurrection of the Body and Life everlasting."

With these two articles of Faith the Apostles brought the Creed to an end; and as we see very appropriately. For after laying down the great truths of Faith which tell of the Creation and the Redemption in the early part of the Creed, we look forward naturally to the end in which such a beginning and such means finally terminate. In these last articles we are told the end is the Resurrection of the Body and Everlasting Life.

As we saw in an early chapter, death did not enter at all into the design of God when He created man in the beginning. It was threatened as a punishment of disobedience, and once sin came death followed as a matter of course. "By one man sin entered into this world, and by sin death; and so death passed upon all men in whom all have sinned" (Rom. v, 12). Death, then, would never have got a hold on mankind but for sin, which made it in a measure, a necessity. It is true, of course, that a material body like ours composed of different elements, as the bodies of other creatures, is liable to dissolution, and a life depending on outside support is liable to fail, as in fact it does fail now in

every case. But there is in man an element more important than the body, to which to live is natural, and from which the body draws its life; now this element—the soul, immortal by nature and indestructible—was created in every instance for the body which it animated, and to which it was fitted by the hand of the Creator. "But a body thou has fitted to me" (Heb. x, 5), may be said of every soul as well as of the Redeemer. When separated from the body, then, at death, there is a want of nature, and a tendency arising from nature, no matter how perfected otherwise, in each soul towards the body to which it was first fitted and adapted, and in natural union with which its life on earth was spent (St. Thomas, Suppl. Q. lxxv, A. 1). Hence if not for its own sake, because of the soul to which the body was united, and by which it was made to live, and the whole man was constituted in the fullness of his nature, there is much to be said in favour of the Resurrection. But in the order of nature the possibility of the Resurrection is hopeless (St. Thomas, Suppl. Q. lxxv, A. 3). For if the body was incapable of holding the soul when death came on, that incapacity is but increased by continued separation. And when the process of dissolution, which sets in after death, continues unchecked until the elements of the body become separated and enter into new combinations, in virtue of which what remains is no longer a human body but earth or such like, what hopes remain for another life? Nor indeed is it in these elements, or from the earth with which they become comingled is there a hope of a Resurrection, for neither man nor animal comes to life that way. Only the omnipotent

power and the unbounded wisdom and knowledge that drew creation out of nothing the first day and gave it stable being, and that fashioned the component elements of the human body so as to be made the fitting tenement of the soul that gave it life, can search out these scattered elements again and build them up once more into the formation of that self-same body they formed previously on earth (St. Thomas Suppl. Q. lxxviii, A. 3). And this must needs be if there is to be a resurrection. The same body, that, vivified by the soul, constituted that person in the fullness of his humanity, must rise from the dead, "For it cannot be called a resurrection, unless the soul returns to the same body" (St. Thomas Suppl. Q. lxxix, A. i). "Resurrection is of what has fallen, a rising up again" (St. John Damascene). All mortals will rise again in the same bodies which they now bear," says Pope Innocent III (Council Lateran). United again with the soul the body will share with it the reward or punishment, the vice or virtue they practised in common will have merited. For this is the purpose of the Resurrection. As it was not a part only, but the whole man, that served God or failed to serve Him, so not a part only but the whole man will experience the reward, whatever it will prove to be, of happiness or misery of the future state. Now though on a par with creation and demanding the power of the Creator, the Resurrection of the body is to be. There is hardly a truth of revelation more clearly vouched for in the Word of God. In the Old Testament the language of Job is well known in this connection. "For I know," he says, "that my Redeemer liveth, and in the last day

I shall rise out of the earth, and I shall be clothed again with my skin, and in my flesh I shall see my God" (Ch. xix, 25) The Prophecy of Ezechiel (Ch. xxxvii) to the dry bones that he saw joined together joint to joint, and that became covered with flesh, and the skin stretched out over them, and when the spirit came upon them, stood up upon their feet an exceeding great army, is descriptive of the Resurrection. The promise in the same Chapter (xxxvii) "I will open your grave and will bring you out of your sepulchres, my people" (12), is equally expressive of the Resurrection though addressed directly to Israel.

Belief in the Resurrection was the common faith of the Jews at all times. Judas Machabeus sent a large offering of silver to Jerusalem for sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the dead, "thinking well and religiously, concerning the Resurrection. For if he had not hoped that they that were slain should rise again it would have seemed superfluous and vain to pray for the dead" (2 Mach. xii, 43, 44). When our Lord said to Martha "thy brother shall rise again," Martha said to Him, "I know that he shall rise again in the Resurrection at the last day" (John, xi, 24). In her mind the future resurrection of the body was a matter of course.

The principal error of the Sadducees—an heretical sect among the Jews at the time of our Lord-—was their denial of the Resurrection. On questioning Him one day on the point He said to them: "you err, not knowing the Scriptures or the power of God. For in the Resurrection they shall neither marry nor be married, but shall be as the Angels of God in Heaven" (Matt. xii, 24). That goes beyond a mere assertion that the Resurrection

is to be. "And concerning the Resurrection of the dead, He goes on : Have you not read that which was spoken of God, saying to you, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob ? He is not the God of the dead but of the living," If He is not the God of Abraham who was dead at the time, but of the living Abraham, there is to be a time when Abraham will live, and therefore will be risen from the dead. The argument in favour of the Resurrection contained in these words was understood by the people, for the Scripture tells us, "And the multitude hearing it were in admiration of His doctrine" (Matt. xxii, 33). St. Paul frequently spoke of the Resurrection. Indeed his teaching this doctrine at one time, was the occasion of his appeal to Rome for a fair trial, when accused by the Jews (Acts xxiv, 21). He devoted a whole chapter of his first Epistle to the Corinthians to a discussion of the Resurrection, and he argued the resurrection of the dead from the Resurrection of Christ. "If the dead rise not again neither is Christ risen again ; and if Christ be not risen again . . . then they also that are fallen asleep in Christ are perished," such importance did St. Paul attach to this great truth. Indeed only in the Resurrection of the dead does he see the justification for the penances of the just in this life. "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable" (1 Cor. xv, 14), i.e., having so little worldly happiness in this life if there is no prospect of the Resurrection of the body hereafter they are the most miserable of all men.

This was the faith of the Church from the beginning. Indeed the hope of the Resurrection was the greatest

incentive to the faithful to bear persecution with constancy, as we see in the lives of the Martyrs; and the symbols of the Resurrection are among the monuments of the Faith which the first ages have left us, as we see in the Paintings of the Catacombs. The rites and ceremonies of Christian burial are largely in view of the future Resurrection, and the care of the faithful for the remains of those who have gone from them has its source and justification in the belief that they will one day rise again. It is not alone the hope of the happiness of the departed soul—that it is at rest with Christ—that has taken much of the sting out of death, but the belief that the body, that is consigned to the grave with tender devotion, will rise again at the Resurrection. Destined indeed, as our Lord has declared, for companionship with the angels, and to sit down with the Patriarchs in His Kingdom for ever, the bodies that were heirs of so much corruption in all cases, and vice in so many, need a purification of their own before admission to such company (St. Thomas. Suppl. Q. lxxviii, A. ii, A.D. 2). Hence will they moulder into dust in the burying places of the earth, and by a process of thorough disintegration, be purified before being built up again into new bodies cleansed in every element, from every defilement of sin and corruption. "It is sown in corruption, it shall rise in incorruption . . . For this corruptible must put on incorruption and this mortal put on immortality. And when this mortal has put on immortality then shall come to pass the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory, "O death, where is thy victory. O Death, where is thy sting" (1 Cor. xv, 55).

It is to be noted, however, that though there is to be a victory over death in every instance, it will not in every case be a triumph. "We shall all indeed rise again, but we shall not all be changed" (1 Cor, xv, 51). "The hour cometh, said our Lord, wherein all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that have done good things shall come forth into the Resurrection of Life, but they that have done evil unto the Resurrection of Judgment" (John, v, 28, 29). As to these last, whatever satisfaction there may be in the union of the soul again with the body for which it was created, there is no doubt that it is not for the happiness of either that the body is to be built up again out of its primal elements, and endowed with immortality. Separated from its last end it is out of its destined place, nor is a substitute provided in the Resurrection for the happiness it was designed to enjoy for ever. Feeling and sense and physical nature are all alike the heirs of appropriate sufferings, and to rise again and to live for ever is small compensation for so great ills. Far otherwise will it be with them "who shall come forth into the resurrection of life." As the body will live by the life of the soul, so will it be happy by participating in the happiness the soul enjoys. And as the souls of the Blessed are happy throughout the whole extent of their nature, all faculties and powers, "receiving good measure and running over," so nothing that makes for the perfection of human nature in each person will be wanting either to the souls or bodies of the Blessed (St. Thomas, Q. lxxxi, A. ii). But "as star differeth from star in glory, so also is the Resurrection

of the Dead" (1 Cor xv, 41). "And as one is the glory of the sun, and another the glory of the moon, and another the glory of the stars" (1 Cor. xv, 41), the same standard of perfection will not be that of either the bodies or the souls of the Blessed. Each will be perfect in its own degree, everything by way of excess or defect being taken away from the bodies of the Just. Hence, too, the passions that were suitable to our mortal condition, and that had their own appropriate satisfactions, having no further object to aim at, or reason, for their exercise, and purified moreover at their source, will be stilled and composed for good in the higher spiritual happiness that will leave nothing further to desire (St. Thomas. Q. lxxix, A. iv).

As to the time of the Resurrection, and the manner of it, what we are told is that it will be sudden and unexpected. "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet, for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall rise again incorruptible" (1 Cor. xv, 52). But of that day and hour no one knoweth, no, not the angels of heaven, but the Father alone" (Matt. xxiv, 36).

Immediately after the Resurrection the General Judgment will take place. Our Lord tells us in the Gospel what is to happen (Matt. xxv, 31–46): "And when the Son of Man shall come in His majesty and all the Angels with Him, then shall He sit on the seat of His majesty. And all the nations shall be gathered together before Him, and He shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats. And He shall set the sheep on His right hand but the

goats on His left. Then shall the King say to them that shall be on His right hand, 'Come ye Blessed of My Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave Me to eat. I was thirsty and you gave Me to drink.' . . . Then He shall say to them also that shall be on His left hand, "Depart from me you cursed into everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me not to eat. I was thirsty and you gave Me not to drink," etc, etc. Here is the great issue of human life described for us beforehand in the prophetic words of Him who beheld it, and who will play the leading part in the great event as He played so great a part to make the issue a favourable one for all men.

Seeing the future as He saw it, the questions that so greatly trouble most men had small interest for Him in His lifetime. He thought of what would follow in the passing interests of the day in the case of each person just as He saw the final issue of all temporal things in the issues of the Last Judgment. Eternal Life, or Everlasting punishment—the two great alternatives —were for Him the great things. If we should follow His example and utilize the opportunities and facilities we possess in the Church to make the issue favourable, then indeed we shall not have lived in vain ; and when our fate will come to be decided for ever we may look with an assured confidence to be placed on the right hand with the elect, and be invited to enter with them into Everlasting Life.

APPENDIX.

Faith, Hope and Charity, or the Divine Virtues.

Faith, Hope and Charity, these three, but the greater of these is Charity (1 Cor. xiii, 13). We have made frequent mention in the foregoing pages, as indeed one finds generally in books of this kind, of Faith, and Hope and Charity. They are the common-places of religion, and cannot be overlooked when questions referring to it are discussed. Our Lord, as we have seen, spoke frequently of Faith, and He insisted on it as an indispensable condition of His service. He did not so often refer to Hope and Charity, but both of these are no less essential than Faith, if men are to live so as to please God and enjoy His friendship. What then are Faith and Hope and Charity? They are divine virtues which enable us to perform the Acts appropriate to each of them, acts which are of the very essence of Divine worship.

A virtue, as is well known, is a good habit or disposition that enables us to do with ease and readiness the good actions that are proper to us. Justice, for example, is a virtue that inclines us to be fair in our dealings with others. Patience helps us to restrain our temper: temperance to moderate our appetite for food or drink, and so with a great many others. These virtues can be acquired by care and attention, and if practised with no higher than a natural purpose or motive, and have no reference to God as in the case of an unbeliever they are natural virtues. If acquired by the help of grace, and are exercised with a super-

natural aim and purpose they are supernatural virtues. Such are the Moral Virtues of a Christian. To acquire these Moral Virtues is a Christian duty, and a necessary part of the education of the young is to instruct them in these virtues, and to train them to practise them from their tender years. Without these virtues the observance of the Commandments will be not only difficult but impossible, and the possession of them is an indispensable acquirement of a Christian.

The Supernatural Virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity, which are called the Divine Virtues, differ in most respects from these. God, under one aspect or another, is the object of the supernatural virtues, not as He is made known to us by natural reason, but by the revelation of His Word. We believe in God by Faith, we trust in God by Hope, we love God by Charity. Hence they are called supernatural or more strictly divine virtues, and hence, too, they cannot be acquired by our own efforts. They are God's gift. They come to us from Him and they refer back again to Him. But though we cannot attain to either Faith or Hope, or Charity of ourselves in the first instance, once we have received them we can improve, strengthen and develop them by faithful co-operation with the impulses of grace in reference to them. They are given to us at Baptism, like so many other supernatural gifts, as the befitting endowments of a soul sanctified by grace—of one who is made a child of God and an heir to the inheritance of His kingdom. Just as in our natural life, power for action grows with our growth, and we not alone live but are capable of doing certain actions according to our years, so in the supernatural life to which God raises us by Baptism,

there comes with grace the faculty for actions appropriate to that life. That is with the grace of Baptism God confers on us, or infuses into our soul the virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity, to enable us to perform the acts that are appropriate to the supernatural life and are the evidences of it. And as in nature the power for action lies dormant in us until an impulse comes to awaken it, and we act or not according to our own good pleasure, so too, without the impulse of actual grace or the breath of the Holy Spirit upon the mind and heart the supernatural virtues lie quiescent in us, nor do they move to appropriate action under this divine influence except as we decide in the exercise of our own free will. Hence the merit of our virtuous deeds, because ever the outcome of our free co-operation with the impulses of grace (*Council of Trent* on Justification). But underlying these impulses, and at the root of this co-operation, are the virtues we speak of, and especially the virtue of Faith. These were inset in the soul at Baptism, and are the source of all that activity in which the supernatural life of the Faithful manifests itself. And on the other hand, as in the natural order one can neglect his talents, and dissipate his fortune instead of cultivating and improving it, so, too, if heedless of the opportunities of grace, and insensible to the impulses to good and virtuous deeds, one grows indifferent or worse, these divine virtues languish in the soul and one may become a failure in the order of grace as in the social order. In grace, as in nature, a faculty is improved by exercise ; it deteriorates or dies of neglect.

Faith.

The first of the Divine virtues is Faith. And if one thing may be said to be more important than another, where all are essential and indispensable, Faith, which the Council of Trent says "is the foundation of man's salvation and the root of all justification" (Sess. vi, Cap. 8), is the most necessary of the divine virtues. It is the foundation on which salvation depends. "Without it," as St. Paul teaches, "it is impossible to please God" (Heb. vi, 6). Not that Hope and Charity are not necessary too (*Council of Trent*, Sess. vi, Cap. 7). But if Faith is not, neither is Hope or Charity, while as long as Faith remains there is ever room for Hope and the possibility of making everything right again. On nothing did our Blessed Saviour insist with equal emphasis in His public discourses, as we learn from the Gospel. It was the pre-requisite for membership of His following, as it is to-day, and ever has been for membership of His Church. And though Faith is given to us at Baptism, no grown person is qualified to receive that Sacrament who has not already the grace of Faith. But if so, with Baptism is given a fullness and a strength of Faith and what St. Paul calls "a peace in believing" (Rom. xv, 13), that makes everything in the teaching and practice of the Church easy and as it were natural to us. This is what, to converts to the Faith, is so striking in their own experience. To Catholics who received the Faith in childhood to believe is, at it were, natural and as a matter of course.

In their day the Apostles spared no efforts to impress

on their hearers and their followers this salutary truth. "Without Faith," says St. Paul, "it is impossible to please God" (Heb. xi, 6), and every one of them preached and acted on the same doctrine. They all laid down their lives for the Faith, and faced death for it with gladness, in the assured confidence of passing through death to everlasting happiness. They handed on the same belief and spirit to their followers, and for three hundred years to profess the Faith was to be exposed to persecution, and in countless instances to die a Martyr. But it was not to be so for ever. A change came with time when men in high places made profession of the Gospel. But whether to profess the Gospel was an occasion of martyrdom or not, to hold by the truths of faith with certain and unshaken fidelity is ever the condition on which to obtain the favour of God. "For he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and is the Rewarder of them that seek Him" Heb. xi, 6).

What then is Faith? There is more than one definition of Faith according to the sense in which one speaks of it. Taken in the ordinary sense, Faith, as we have said, is a divine virtue by which we firmly believe what God has taught. It is a gift that comes from God —a virtue infused into the soul at Baptism, that enables us to accept with unhesitating certainty whatever is proposed by the Church as revealed by God. Faith regards God as the infallible Truth, and once satisfied that He has spoken, one who has Faith is certain of the truth of what is revealed. Now this is the Faith of which St. Paul says "without which it is impossible to please God." But there is another sense

allied to this in which we speak of Faith. That is when we regard God not as teaching, or the Author of revealed Truth, but as He is in Himself, infinitely good—the source of all grace and blessings, and ever ready to bestow His help and favour on all who approach Him with confidence, "rich unto all that call upon Him" (Rom. x, 12). Now it is this Faith, a trusting confiding faith in God, Whose Goodness is so fully declared in His revealed Word, our Saviour so much desired to see flourishing in the hearts of men. "All things whatsoever you shall ask in prayer", said He, "believing you shall receive" (Matt. xxi, 22). "O woman! great is thy faith, be it done to thee as thou wilt" (Matt. xv, 28). It is from this living faith that looks upon God as good as He is powerful, as merciful as He is great, have come those achievements and wonders that Christian men have brought about sustained so little by human support, and often in the face of manifold opposition and great difficulties. St. Paul in all his Epistles, gives abundant evidence of his great Faith in God. One time with evident wholeheartedness he says: "For this cause I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. iii, 14). In the eleventh Chapter of his Epistle to the Hebrews he reminds the Jews of the long line of their Patriarchs and other great men of their history, whose wondrous deeds were the outcome of their great faith and confidence in God. Recalling Abraham and others of the Patriarchs, and overlooking hosts of names too numerous to mention, he says of them, "who by faith conquered kingdoms, wrought justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire,

escaped the edge of the sword, recovered strength from weakness, became valiant in battle, put to flight the armies of foreigners. Women received their dead raised to life again. But others were racked, not accepting deliverance, that they might find a better resurrection. And others had trials of mockeries and stripes, moreover also of bonds and prisons. They were stoned, they were cut asunder, they were tempted, they were put to death by the sword, they wandered about in sheep skins, in goat skins, being in want, distressed, afflicted, of whom the world was not worthy, wandering in deserts, in mountains, and in dens, and in caves of the earth, and all these being approved by the testimony of faith, etc." In writing thus of the works and sacrifices of others the Apostle was but narrating what could be said with equal or greater truth of himself. For the labours and sufferings of St. Paul for the Faith, and its spread among the nations, obtained for him the title of the Apostle of the Gentiles. And the success that attended his labours everywhere he attributed, not to any gifts of nature or other advantages he had at his command, but to the Faith and confidence he had in the help of Him whose name he gloried in making known in every place " For not in the persuasive words of human wisdom did he depend, but in the showing of the spirit and power" (1 Cor. ii, 4).

This gift of Faith is what distinguishes the Church all over the world. Her existence is a standing witness for Faith. Her ministers are engaged in the work of God in the midst of a world devoted to earthly interests and pursuits. Like her Founder who died for man's salvation her ministers are ever engaged in work for

souls, in bringing men to God to know Him and to serve Him. The spirit that sent St. Paul over Asia Minor and Southern Europe, preaching Christ Crucified (1 Cor, i) to Greeks and Barbarians, and counting all things as dross if he could but establish His kingdom among men, is the same that inspired the missionaries of the Church during all the intervening centuries, and enabled them to convert men from paganism and ignorance to the service of God and the ways of virtue. And just as our Saviour sent out His disciples to preach, wanting in all temporal resources, and they came back to Him, their mission accomplished, and acknowledged that they wanted for nothing ; "when I sent you without purse and scrip and shoes did you want anything? But they said, Nothing." (Luke xxii, 35, 36), so have the missionaries of the Church gone abroad relying not on wealth which they had not, nor on the favour of the great who were indifferent, and through sufferings and sacrifices patiently borne, but strong in faith in the blessing and help of Him in whose interest they laboured, and planted the Faith in hearts that were strangers to it, and won nations and peoples to the Kingdom of Christ. It is this spirit of faith that brought St. Patrick to Ireland. It is this that supported him when an unknown castaway in the Antrim Hills, that secured his return to liberty, that sent him a pilgrim to the monasteries of Gaul and the Isles of the Mediterranean for years, and that brought him back an apostle and a bishop, with authority to preach from the Head of the Church, Pope Celestine, and made his preaching the marvellous success it was amongst our forefathers. It was the same faith that sent

hosts of Irish missionaries for centuries afterwards to evangelize the tribes of Central Europe and win them to the Church. The ascetic lives of these wonderful saints, and the power that went out with their teaching and example, was the result of their great faith in God that was all aglow in their hearts. And when they taught their converts the ways of civilization as of virtue, and tamed the rugged face of nature to minister to the wants of the people, and brought beauty and plenty to the land with religion and virtue, it was because of the faith that taught them the value of men's souls, and what is becoming for men both for time and for eternity. And as in the wake of the faith came learning and the knowledge of the arts, the religious monuments, cathedrals, and churches, with which every country in Europe is thickly studded, bear witness to the faith that followed on the teaching of those great Saints. Those converts of centuries ago, and their descendants in more Catholic times, whatever else they handed down to posterity, gave of their best to religion. The absence of such monuments in whatever countries heresy has prevailed tells us the loss to the higher and better interests in life, of the want of faith among a people ; and in the deeper and more important things that go to the upraising of humanity —in the field of morals and religion—the loss to society as to individuals of the want of faith is more grievous still. Our Divine Lord " Who knew what was in man ") John ii, 25), knew what he wanted to refine and to fit him for his destiny. He knew that earthly ideals would not do it. A light caught from heaven in his heart that was needed. It is the light of

faith that tells of God and His goodness, of the worth and possibilities of man's own soul, and how to train and form it for time and for eternity. This light He sends through the Sacrament of Baptism at our birth, and fostered and nurtured in the Church through our years, we are made to live by this light of Faith, lives worthy of our nature at its best—worthy of the children of God on earth, who are heirs to His eternal kingdom in heaven. It is this faith that enables men and women to make sacrifice of this world's most coveted gifts, riches, station, distinction, and to exchange such things for lives of labour and privation and obedience either in the missionary field among Pagans and unbelievers so as to win them to the Gospel, or hidden in the obscurity of the cloister, dead indeed to the world and its ambitions and maxims, but living and active in the service of God by prayer and unselfish labour for the lowly and afflicted. Such faith is a well-known phenomenon in the Catholic Church and peculiar to it, of which we have frequent examples. To join the Church many converts have shown the same spirit indeed, and have edified their age by great sacrifices freely made for the Faith, and have given examples of unworldliness, and belief in the higher and better things of the spirit that has secured for them a place among those who are "the salt of the earth." This faith is "the pearl of great price that a man sells all that he has to buy it" (Matt. xiii, 46). It is the undercurrent in the life of Catholics, the spring and source of their religious practices, and of the unworldly view (so unintelligible often to unbelievers) they take of the accidents and happenings of life. It is this Faith that yields calm

resignation in sorrow, that sees the inscrutable and adorable ways of Providence in disappointments and adversity, but the shadow of His outstretched correcting hand. In the light of this faith the Moral Law and the Commandments have an importance and compelling force that receive a willing acceptance and obedience, and the worship and honour of God the first and most important claim on our service. While this Faith flourishes in the Church it is an assurance that the end of all things is not yet. "The Son of Man, when He cometh, shall He find, think you, faith on earth?" (Luke, xviii, 8). St. Paul describes this faith "the substance of things to be hoped for, the evidence of things that appear not" (Heb. xi, 1). It is not, of course, as we may assume, in all persons in the same degree, It is given "according to the measure of the giving of Christ" (Ep. iv, 7), and His spirit, "dividing to everyone according as He will" (1 Cor. xii, 11), and our own faithful co-operation with its aspirations.

We have touched, however hurriedly, on the evidences of Faith in some of its most pronounced expressions in the lives of men who have "walked by faith, and not by sight" (2 Cor, v, 7). To all who possess it, the present life, how engrossing and important soever, is not the end of all things, but the means to the higher and more enduring end that awaits us after death in the world to come. In the light of that world and its higher interests, more than the present, it regards all things. Hence the standards and principles of Faith are incommensurable with the standards of this world. The measure of it in their hearts is the measure of men's service of God and of their neighbour; and by

means of it "all things work together unto good to such as are called to be Saints" (Rom, viii, 28).

Hope.

After Faith and in keeping with it, and as a sort of consequence of it, comes the virtue of Hope. Not indeed that Faith begets Hope, for in the supernatural order in which Christ is all in all, while one thing may lead up by a sort of natural progression to another, each step in the movement is the result of a separate impulse. For grace corresponded to, a new grace is given; not that one grace begets another. So with Faith and Hope. Now after the Faith that takes God at His Word, and puts all trust in His promises, and acts out that trust in actual living, as we notice so well in the Saints and in their measure in the lives of the ordinary Faithful, comes the gift of Hope. What is Hope? Hope, like Faith, is a supernatural virtue infused into the soul by God that enables us to expect from Him eternal life, and all helps of grace requisite and useful to obtain it. As Faith is based on the eternal truthfulness and knowledge of God, so Hope is founded on His infinite goodness and unfailing fidelity to His promises. For God has not laid on man the duty of an unrequited service. He treats us according to the condition and gifts of our nature, and in return for free and faithful service He holds out the promise of a reward of surpassing happiness. Created for happiness and unable to find rest except in the possession of it, St. Paul tells us so great is the reality of the happiness awaiting those who are faithful in God's service that it surpasses

absolutely our highest anticipations. "It hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive what God has prepared for them that love Him" (1 Cor, ii, 9). Our Lord calls it eternal life, "and in the world to come life everlasting" (Luke xviii, 30). "This is the promise which he hath promised us, life everlasting" (1 St. John, ii, 25). "Unto the hope of life everlasting which God, who lieth not, hath promised before the times of the world" (Titus i, 2). And in the times of the world when our Blessed Saviour lived and moved among men, and announced His doctrine and invited them to embrace it, in clear and definite terms and not once and again, but on repeated occasions, and in various circumstances, He declared the reward of His service would be everlasting life. This, in fact, is His Covenant in the New Law. "Amen, amen I say unto you, that he that hath My word and believeth Him that sent Me, hath life everlasting" (John v, 24). "Amen, I say to you that there is no man that hath left home or parents, etc., who shall not receive much more in this present, and in the world to come, life everlasting" (Luke xviii, 29, 30). The Apostles in their teaching referred to this as a well-known truth, and preached it as an integral part of their message. "He is the Mediator of the New Testament that by means of His death. . . . they that are called may receive the promise of eternal inheritance" (Heb. ix, 25). "This is the promise which He has promised us, life everlasting" (1 St. John ii, 25 : Matt, xix, 29).

Such an end as this is manifestly above man's strivings, ambitions, aspirations, and is out of all proportion to his labours. "For that which is at present mom-

entary and light of our tribulation worketh for us above all measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor, iv, 17). But if so it is strikingly in keeping with the great truths of revelation that are accepted on the assurances of faith. Is it not in keeping with the mystery of the Incarnation, and the wonders done in his Humanity by our Blessed Saviour ? The scheme of redemption undertaken on our behalf is a warrant of everlasting life of which our Saviour spoke so freely and so frequently. This indeed is a fitting object of supernatural Hope—an object that is in God's gift alone, and worthy of Him, and to be attained only by His sufficing and unfailing help.

There is, of course, the instant reward of the peace of a good conscience, attendant on the faithful discharge of duty. But that may be no better than the result of the balancing of equalities in our inner consciousness, and may be altogether independent of Faith. But the man of Faith has a higher ambition, and a better and larger hope (Heb. vii, 19). This is founded on the promise of God, Whose word is pledged, as we have seen, to grant everlasting life, not to every one indeed but to all who keep the Commandments. "If thou wilt enter into life keep the Commandments" (Matt. xix, 17).

Eternal life, then, which God has promised, and which he alone can give is the object of Hope. Such an object being above our attainment, and the reality of it so far surpassing our comprehension can be aimed at only by trust in the Word "of God who lieth not" who has promised it to all who serve Him. And just as the attributes of God—His knowledge and Truth are

the sufficient justification for Faith, so His attributes again of power and goodness are the guarantees of Hope. Given then our part in the compact we must hope in God for the rest, yet so that even to will to do our part is ever His gift, "for it is God Who worketh in you both to will and accomplish according to His good will" (Phil. ii, 13). Hence the Hope we speak of is not the expectation of nature which looks to a happiness in the satisfaction of our highest aspirations after truth and goodness. It is that aspiration raised to a higher aim and raised itself to a higher nature as the result of grace. This supernatural hope is infused with Faith at Baptism, and like it survives the loss of grace and exercises its own useful influence over us as long as faith itself remains (*Council of Trent*, Chap. Justification). Founded not on our fidelity to grace, nor on our own strength of purpose, but on the goodness and mercy of God Who died to save sinners, and Who wishes all men to be saved—Hope like Faith survives in the midst of spiritual ruin and the actual loss of God's friendship. The promises of God extend to such conditions as these, and some of the greatest examples of the power of Hope are found amidst situations so discouraging and grave. The confident expectation or hope of pardon is indeed the only remaining support of the sinner when he turns to God and asks forgiveness. Taught by Faith of His readiness to forgive, and strengthened in confidence by the parables of our Saviour showing His "willingness to have mercy and to spare" like the Prodigal in the extremity of wretchedness, he says in his heart, "I will arise and will go to my father" (Luke xv, 18). This

is an obvious and every day instance of the place of Hope in the work of salvation. It is seen to greater advantage and with better effect in the case of the good and virtuous. These, while ever conscious of their liability to fall at any time from grace, and conscious too, that to persevere to the end is a special grace from God, and not to be merited by their own efforts (*Council of Trent* on Justification), while they pray for this great gift of perseverance so that they may be numbered among the saved "but, he that shall persevere to the end shall be saved" (Matt. x, 22), they are "confident that he who hath begun a good work in them will perfect it unto the day of Christ Jesus" (Phil. i, 6), and this quite consistently with a certain fear from which even St. Paul was not entirely free, "lest having preached to others he should become a castaway himself" (1 Cor, ix, 27). Such is everyone who has the gift of Hope. Conscious of his own weakness, aye, and of his failings, he is not disheartened. He knows if he is weak that there is a power ever available by which he can surmount all obstacles: "I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me" (Phil. iv, 13). And looking upon "God as his hope and his salvation" with the Prophet, and like the Prophet again regarding Him as the source "from Whom help is to come" (Psalm), he measures his chances of success not by his own strength and efforts, but by the help he confidently expects from God. All the greater Prophets of the Old Testament, David in his trials, Job in his afflictions,—Isaias and Jeremiah and the Minor Prophets,—abound in beautiful passages showing the strength and confidence of their hope.

And this is precisely the effect of this supernatural virtue, viz., to look above and beyond ourselves, and to trust not to our own capacity or powers and efforts, but to put entire confidence in the blessing and help of God. And it is not for the greater gifts which come from Him alone—grace and eternal happiness—but for even such as come through secondary causes and the agency of others. In the ordinary course of human affairs men depend for results on their natural capacity and ability, and ordinarily seek the assistance of no higher aid. In the supernatural order to which we have been raised and in which we live, the instruments of our activity are Faith and Hope. "Blessed is he who hath the God of Jacob for his helper, whose hope is in the Lord His God" (Psal. xlv, 5). They understood that well in the Old Law. They act on it regularly in the New.

It is to this supernatural Hope joined to a supernatural Faith we have to trace the success of the Catholic Church in its most striking manifestations. Think of the great missionaries in any age from St. Peter to the Maynooth Mission to China. What was St. Peter's dependence, an obscure stranger and poor, on coming to the proud imperial capital of the First Empire of the World? His purpose was to convert these haughty Romans to the truth of the Gospel of Peace. His "trust was not in chariots and horses, but he called upon the Name of the Lord, his God" (Psal. xx). He trusted in the help of His Master Who bade him have confidence in Him (John xvi), and strong in faith and hope in His assistance he succeeded in his arduous mission. St. Francis Xavier went from Europe to

the East—to India and Japan—and in a few years, himself alone, a stranger and poor, converted millions to the Faith. The Faith and Hope that inspired such undertakings, and crowned them with astonishing success, tell of the "weapons of our warfare" (2 Cor. x, 4), and of the influence with God of such virtues as these. Indeed this supernatural hope is the foundation of all the undertakings of the faith, and the assurance of their success. On what slender basis, humanly speaking, have individual men, aye, and women, built up many of the great institutions, moral and material, we admire in the Church? Consider the origin and growth of the religious orders. Take one or two examples—a young man, Francis by name, somewhere in the twelfth century, leaves his home and his family and hides himself away in prayer and penance from every eye. After a while associates cluster around him. They have no earthly means. Yet God who feeds the birds of the air, and clothes the meadows in colours beyond the imitation of art, provides food and raiment and shelter for His servants. The Religious institute St. Francis founded then survives still, has houses in the cities of both hemispheres, is strong in numbers and in good works, and has made countless people its debtors for all kinds of spiritual services. An Anthony sells all he has in the world, distributes the price among the poor, retires to the desert of his native Africa, and in time becomes Patriarch of the Egyptian solitaries. If Manna does not fall a second time to feed these desert dwellers they know no want from the blessing of Him for Whose service they have fled from the world to a life of retirement and prayer. So too the Friar of to-day,

though a mendicant by profession, is spared the asking of his daily bread anticipated by the spontaneous thoughtfulness of his pious neighbours. And so these allied virtues of Faith and Hope infused into men's hearts by God, and leaning upon Him for the fulfillment of the aspirations they inspire, are spiritual forces, the efficiency of which is found as trusty in a material age as in an atmosphere of a most undoubting faith.

In how many situations this Hope in God's help and blessing is found productive of good there is no telling. In the most distressing and desperate circumstances it gives a courage of endurance that nothing else can furnish. It spiritualizes and makes profitable for the soul and for eternity what otherwise would be a mere human enterprise or experience, the usefulness of which would be bounded by time and measured by earthly standards. Far from discarding human means and human agencies, it selects the most appropriate and uses them for their worth. But it looks not to them alone for results but rather to the blessing and favouring help of God. "I have planted, Apollo watered, but God gave the increase" said St. Paul (1 Cor. iii, 6). Hope ever looks to Him for success. By these two kindred virtues of Faith and Hope we are brought into immediate contact with God. The activities of the supernatural life to which He has raised us are brought into exercise. We pay Him honour by appropriate service, and earn for ourselves the reward prepared for all who serve Him—a hundredfold in this world and in the next life everlasting.

Charity.

The last of the Divine Virtues is Charity, and St. Paul tells us it is the greatest of them. "Faith, Hope, and Charity, these three, but the greater of these is Charity" (1 Cor, xiii, 13). What is Charity? "Charity is a divine virtue by which we love God above all things for His own sake and our neighbour as ourselves for the love of God." From this definition we see that Charity refers to God in a manner very different from Faith and Hope. These lean on God's words and promises. Charity refers directly to God Himself. And it refers to Him not as from a distance and in a vague and indefinite way, but in the most intimate manner by love, for love is the act of charity. Love we may describe as the complacency of the will in something represented to us as good. Whether we can love a thing for its own goodness irrespective of all consideration of self, or whether unconsciously self is mixed up in some measure in every act of love, there is no doubt that we love most things because they satisfy a want we recognize in ourselves. Nothing is more common than love in this broad sense. For nothing in creation is perfect in itself—nothing is self-sufficient. There is a want which has to be supplied from without, we may say many wants, in everything in nature. Man is no exception. We have to wish for many things that are not numbered among our gifts. And this is especially true in reference to our higher faculties. Such is the nature of the soul that nothing but the Creator who made it to the image of Himself can fully satisfy its desires. Only in the fruition of God can the mind

and will of man find final rest and peace, from further longings. Now this cannot be in life. It is the consummation after death of what is begun here by the exercise of Charity. Hence when Faith and Hope will fail in the possession of what was believed and longed for, Charity will live on in the love and fruition of God. And hence says St. Paul, "Charity never falleth away, whether prophecies shall be made void, or tongues shall cease, or knowledge shall be destroyed" (1 Cor. xiii, 8).

Besides this consideration of the unfailing nature of Charity, and of its object, it is significant that the first and the greatest of the Commandments, as our Lord tells us, is that of Charity. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with thy whole mind" (Matt. xxii, 37). Now when we remember that the Commandments are but a reinforcement on the part of God of the better instincts of our moral nature—a voice from heaven that is echoed in every heart—we can realize that Charity or the aspirations of the soul to, and the love of the soul for God, the Creator, are the first and most becoming sentiments we have and should have first claim on us always. We want, too, the correcting light and obligation of this Commandment to check the impulses and tendencies of unthinking nature and uninformed passion, and to direct our minds and wills from only apparent and at best unsatisfying good to God who alone can satisfy us and give us full content. Now the virtue of Charity enables us to satisfy this Commandment to the full, and this not according as God is known to us by nature, but according to the fuller knowledge of

Faith. Indeed we may say only where Faith is there is Charity at all. It is this divine knowledge of God and of the things of God that comes of Faith that separates more than anything else the believer from the unbeliever. And if there is a vast difference in the life of the one above the other, it is because where Faith pointed the way Charity followed after. According as men came to know of God and His goodness through the higher and definite knowledge of Faith, touched by the sense of so great perfection they came to order their life in view of so divinely elevating greatness, and dedicated themselves in earnest to His service.

The great example of Divine Charity is our Lord Himself. What is the lesson of His life? From first to last it was a dedication of the most divinely precious life to the glory of God. He has left it on record that the one thought that governed His whole career was His Father's Will. "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me" (John iv, 34). His Apostles gave us a like example. From the day that the Spirit of God descended on them and kindled the fire of divine love in their hearts the one consuming passion of their lives was to work for God—to establish and extend His kingdom among men. All the ages of the Church from their day to the present are rich in examples of what Divine Charity can do in the hearts of all who give willing ear to its suggestions. How many have borne the sacrifice of all that is valuable in life, aye, and the sacrifice of life itself for the love of God. For the love of God men have deliberately parted with their most valued and valuable possessions, and devoted themselves to hidden lives of prayer

and penance till death, or may be to lives of labour and sacrifice for the sole purpose of God's honour and glory. Certain, like St. Paul, it is true to find it all again one day, and more; but not for that did they embrace such lives or make such sacrifices. "For I am certain He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day" (2 Tim. i, 12). Drawing their inspiration from above, and buoyed up with hope and confidence in the unfailing help of Him in whom they trusted, these heroes of the Faith have taught the world what can be done by the weaklings of the earth who have the pure love of God in their hearts. The vigils, the fastings, the prayers, the seclusion from the society of men for peaceful contemplation of divine things, tell what the quality of divine Charity enlightened by Faith is. The same Charity, perhaps in less noticeable form sends its aspirations hourly from the hearts of humble men and women in Catholic Homes over the world, who, mostly unknown and certainly unnoticed, lead lives of intimate union with God, and of great and real love of Him. This is seen in their great respect for God's law, in their scrupulous regard for every intimation of the mind of the Church, and in their spirit of prayer, and an unfailing sense of God's presence.

"If you love Me, says Christ, keep My Commandments" (John xiv, 15). And in the same place He says again, "If any man love Me he will keep My Word" (xiv, 23). The unity of will, which love implies is a guarantee of the observance of God's Law by anyone who has the love of God. The will of those we love is law for us. This is what Divine Charity

does in reference to God. His Will is our Law. But it is more. To love God is to love everything God loves—everything that is dear to Him: hence the love of God implies the love of our fellow-men, for all men are dear to God. All are made to His image: all are redeemed by the Precious Blood of the Saviour. Hence said He, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God; this is the greatest and the first Commandment; and the second is like to this, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matt. xxii, 37-39). In nothing is the effect of divine charity more noticeable amd more striking than in this. To this divine Charity that came into the hearts of men with the Faith have we to trace that change for the better in the ideas and relations of the members of the human family towards each other, of which we find the beginnings in those who made profession of the Gospel. "How these Christians loved one another" was the admiration of the Pagans in the early days of the Faith. "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples if you have love one for another," said our Blessed Saviour (John xiii, 35). The world has had many teachers before and since His coming. Many schools of thought there have been, and each has had disciples and a following. The state of society at the time of our Blessed Saviour, and before that, and ever since outside His Kingdom, tells how barren of useful results—how little capable of raising up men to a sense of their dignity, and lifting up men's lives to a standard befitting them is all their loud philosophy and high-sounding doctrines. The doctrine of the universal brotherhood of all men, that all are equal participators in the blessings of the same Re-

demption, and destined to the same happiness, gave the first and necessary lesson on the substantial equality of all men. The doctrine of love to each other that allowed no conventional distinctions, and that saw in want and suffering an appeal that was imperative, is the teaching of Christ, and special to it. And from the first day this doctrine was preached by the Church, and acted on by the Faithful, no longer neglected and despised, the poor are sought out and cared for, and Christ is honoured when these, His privileged members, are attended to. "As long as you do it to one of these My least brethren you do it to Me" (Matt. xxv, 40).

From the days of the Apostles when collections were made for the needy at the religious gatherings of the Faithful (1 Cor. xv), you can trace as a golden thread down the centuries evidences of care for the poor and suffering as an unfailing feature in the life of the Church. Corresponding to this doctrine, and the source of the activities of various kinds that gave shape and form to its expression was the Divine Virtue of Charity in the hearts of the Faithful. Not Philanthropy or mere human sympathy, but Divine Charity for the suffering members of Christ that built the pilgrim and the leper hospitals, and staffed them with attendants in the garb and profession of Religious. Popes and Bishops distinguished in their high ranks in many respects have this among other claims on our respect and veneration—that they did so much for the poor in their day. They distributed relief, they founded Hospitals, or entertained so many daily at table. Part of the duty of deacons in the early church was the care

of the poor (Act. vi. *Life of St. Lawrence*). Private persons in many instances employed their wealth in providing for the wants of the needy. Early Church History is full of such examples. St. Basil at Caesarea in Cappadocia, St. Chrysostom at Antioch, and later at Constantinople, St. Augustine at Hippo, St. Cyrian at Carthage, and St. Gregory the Great at Rome, to mention but a few well-known names from different centuries were all as remarkable for their Charity to the Poor as for their intellectual gifts and saintly lives. Now in all pre-Christian antiquity, as in all the world to which the teaching of Christ has not penetrated, there was no provision for the poor, the old, the helpless, no word of philosopher, rhetorician or poet to soften their lot, or plead in their behalf. In pagan antiquity the poor were mostly slaves and counted among the chattels of their master like cattle, and treated little better. Charity to the poor is the doctrine of Christ, and the preaching and practice of the Church, or borrowed from her in the first instance. Nor has this charity grown cold in our day, though its form and expression may have changed. Asylums for the aged and afflicted, Hospitals for the suffering and incurables, and such like institutions under the management and control of Religious, and maintained by voluntary benefactions of the public bespeak the presence of this Divine Charity in the hearts of the Christian people. The spoliation of such Institutions by unchristian governments, to the great loss of the afflicted, tell by contrast of the loss to society and to the suffering, of Christian charity in the hearts of men. To foster this charity in their hearts, and to exercise it towards all without

distinction is the constant burden of the Church's exhortation to the people. For "this is the Precept of the Lord," said the Disciple of Love, St. John, "and if kept all will be well."

The worth of this Divine virtue is described for us by St. Paul in language that puts it easily in the forefront among the essential requisites of a Christian, "If I speak," said he, "with the tongues of men and of the angels, and have not charity I have become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And if I should have prophecy and should know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I should have all faith so that I could remove mountains, and have not Charity, I am nothing. And if I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned and have not Charity, it profiteth me nothing" (1 Cor, xiii, 1-3). Without this Divine Virtue or the genuine love of God, which puts His Will above all and before all else in our esteem, and makes the observance of His Law the first duty in life, all gifts besides, even the gift of Faith, is of no account to us. Charity, then, is the crowning gift, essential and indispensable itself, and giving value and worth to every other gift besides. Nothing can supply its place. Nothing can make up for the want of it. Then, to enable us to know whether we have Charity or not, the same Apostle gives us its qualities in great detail. "Charity," says he, "is patient, is kind; Charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely, is not puffed up, is not ambitious, seeketh not her own, is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth;

beareth all things believeth all things hopeth all things, endureth all things" (1 Cor xiii, 4-7).

Faith, Hope and Charity—these three supernatural gifts mark off the people of God from those who are not his people. Nor are these virtues, though distinct, to be regarded as other than correlative gifts. They act and re-act on each other; and as a matter of fact and experience only those who are remarkable for their Faith are similarly remarkable for Charity. Who are the Saints? That chosen company gathered in respectable numbers in every age within the Church, whose love of God was great above all earthly attachment, and you find they are men and women whose Faith was more like seeing than believing. Because of the clear perceptions of their Faith - that they knew God so well, and one might say so intimately, they loved Him so ardently, and devoted all their strength of mind and body so unreservedly to His service. Only in the Church is such a love of God, for only in the Church is such Faith.

Like Faith, and Hope, Charity is strengthened by exercise. Following the clear perceptions of Faith, the thought of God infinitely good exercises increasing influence in drawing us to Him, while such strengthened Charity moderates effectively, if not entirely destroys, such attraction as temporal blessings can exercise on minds destined for eternal happiness. On the other hand, regarding our fellow men in the light of this virtue as our equals in nature, in grace, and destiny, the narrow and selfish thoughts that cramp the heart, and dry up the founts of Charity yield place to the wider and higher principles that rejoice in doing good,

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and are fruitful in the blessed results of peace and friendship, the mitigation of suffering, and the strengthening of the grounds of the high, sustaining, and abiding Hope. The beginnings of Charity is the conversion of a Sinner ; its finished work, a Saint.

We have treated of the divine virtues of Faith, and Hope, and Charity, one after another and noted the effects to be assigned to each of them. It is not to be supposed, however, that these virtues stand separate and apart with little or no connection with each other. They are intimately related on the contrary, and act and re-act constantly on each other. Faith is indeed the foundation of the rest, and the lights of Faith give a strength and substance to the gifts of Charity and Hope, just as they give a range of knowledge and a grasp of supernatural truth such as can be appreciated only by those who have Faith in themselves. The dogmas of religion present little difficulty to one rich in Faith, and the accidents and events of life are shaped and directed for him by the guiding hand of a kind all-seeing Providence. To such a one there is an assured security of God's unfailing care, and an undoubting certainty that all will be well at last. Death and Judgment, and sin itself have little terrors for one armed with such Faith and Hope, for repentance follows upon sin, and to doubt God's willingness to pardon would be the greatest sin of all. Weakness, indeed, and the sudden assaults of passion may rob such a one of grace, but a sense of God's goodness and the offensiveness of sin to Him will not suffer the loss of Charity for long. In the inner chambers of the heart there is a sorrow for sin, which is the outcome of Faith and Hope, and real

love of God, and sin cannot long survive under the united action of these. Hence the value for the ordinary Christian of these great virtues of Faith, and Hope, and Charity. As they are the source of so many of the outward signs of Christian belief, they are the secret springs of grace in the depths of the Christian heart.

DEO GRATIAS

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